

**Vegetarianism in Germany.**

**Food and Land as a Breeding Ground for Sociopolitical Change between 1867 and  
1901?**

**Freie wissenschaftliche Arbeit**

**zur Erlangung eines**

**Mastergrades am Fachbereich**

**Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften**

**der Freien Universität Berlin**

**im Masterstudiengang Global History**

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**2019**

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## Introduction

“I begin with the proposition that eating is an agricultural act.”<sup>1</sup> This claim by Wendell Berry in his famous essay “The pleasures of eating”<sup>2</sup>, put the inherent connection from “farm to fork” between farming and eating in one single phrase in 1990. It must have been a “reforming” statement for all contemporaries so far. First and foremost this applies to those readers for whom an eating human being had been a mere “passive” consumer so far instead of having recognized the single human being as a proactive agent within the food system thanks to exactly his or her individual consumption. Shifting the perspective in the sense of human agency in a holistic way and ascertaining this agency along the whole cycle or more precisely, the “value chain” of a food product from its essential origin in the soil (or, to be admitted in the water or in the stable alternatively) to the final human digestion opens up new accesses to both agriculture and eating. Inescapably, it brings into play: the environment and its needs; matters of natural resources like land; water; fertilizers; the role of animals and fodder production; human work force and the processing of foods; economic distribution; cooking culture and culinary customs; human health; as well as even the planetary boundaries when it comes to the question of an overall sustainable life on Earth as such. Without doubt, Berry stresses in his literal nutshell the individual person’s influence on respective agricultural settings and its design function referring to the availability of natural resources, to farming conditions as well as to all societal, political and economic aspects being touched by food and land.

Much earlier, in 1971, a major pathbreaking publication had already offered clear insight into the interconnectedness between agriculture and human food consumption. Particularly the production and human consumption of meat, the availability of agricultural resources like arable land for either keeping livestock or growing fruits, vegetables or grains to supply to humans immediately and the de-facto planetary boundaries are salient elements of the scholarly or literal work „Diet for a Small Planet“<sup>3</sup> by Frances Moore Lappé. Again, the very well established medical journal *The Lancet*<sup>4</sup> declared 2019 as the year of nutrition. It did so after two commissions of experts had thoroughly investigated the links between food systems, the environment and human health after coalescing aspects like ecologic sustainability,

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<sup>1</sup> *Wendell Berry*: The pleasures of eating, in: *ibid.* : What are people for?, Berkeley 1990, page numbers could not be ascertained, but cited here in a version of the essay being available online via this link: [https://pages.stolaf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/421/2014/08/Berry-Pleasures\\_of\\_Eating.pdf](https://pages.stolaf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/421/2014/08/Berry-Pleasures_of_Eating.pdf), page numbers are not denoted in this online version.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Cp. *Frances Moore Lappé*: Diet for a Small Planet, New York 1971.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. generally <https://www.thelancet.com/>.

nutrition, human health and climate against the backdrop of serious scientific and scholarly methods. In the resulting so called EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report of the respective overall study, Walter Willett, one of the experts states that “ ‘Transformation to healthy diets by 2050 will require substantial dietary shifts. Global consumption of fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes will have to double, and consumption of food such as red meat and sugar will have to be reduced by more than 50 %. A diet rich in plant-based foods and with fewer animal source foods confers both improved health and environmental benefits.’ ”<sup>5</sup>

Against this backdrop it has become obvious that agriculture and food- if we take human agency as a point of departure for an evaluation- encompasses a very wide spectrum ranging from environmental health to human health. Whereas the above quoted approaches and points of departure evidently imply many sociopolitical aspects and dimensions of agriculture and food among others, it for instance was the study “Braune Ökologen. Hintergründe und Strukturen am Beispiel Mecklenburg-Vorpommerns”<sup>6</sup> by the German political foundation Heinrich- Böll- Stiftung which added even another component to the holistic examination of agriculture and food. The study, admittedly being marked by the ideological affinity of Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung to the contemporary German Greens Party to a certain degree, explicitly addressed political and ideological aspects within parts of the current scene of organic agriculture in Germany. The scholarly work, which is an anthology of several contributions, tries to explain and reveal völkisch, right wing and fascist elements in both theoretical and practical fields of some specific societal sectors of organic agriculture and farmers in the German federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Despite its regional focus on the very northeastern part of Germany it generally and in an abstract manner carves out to what extent agricultural matters of land and soil are partly exploited with regards to ideology and party politics or are politically charged respectively. In all different cases being investigated, the authors problematize the de-facto threat of undermining of agriculture and land cultivation by right wing extremists.

Regardless of whether the above essayistic, scientific or scholarly approaches respectively are taken- they all directly or indirectly shed light on the interconnectedness of natural resources, land distribution, soil cultivation, the protection of the environment, specific kinds of

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in the *EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report: Food Planet Health. Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems 2019*, p. 3, the online version of the summary report is available via this link: [https://eatforum.org/content/uploads/2019/07/EAT-Lancet\\_Commission\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](https://eatforum.org/content/uploads/2019/07/EAT-Lancet_Commission_Summary_Report.pdf) .

<sup>6</sup> Cp. *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung/ Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (eds.): Braune Ökologen. Hintergründe und Strukturen am Beispiel Mecklenburg-Vorpommerns*, Berlin-Rostock 2012, the study is available online via this link: <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/Braune-Oekologen.pdf> .

allegedly sustainable agriculture as well as human food consumption, human health and sectors of both politics and public policy. To a greater or lesser extent the reduction of livestock and human meat consumption, the promotion of vegetarian lifestyles, models of “sustainable” self-subsistent and self-determined locally ingrained farming practices are relevant aspects of the above publications.

Accordingly, these statements, studies and contents have been triggers for vivid debates about vegetarianism, the consumption of natural, unprocessed foods and small-scale subsistent agriculture mainly with a focus on producing food plants in the spheres of food policy and sociopolitical discourses. This pertains to the situation in Germany, too. In this context, Slow Food Deutschland e.V., the German association of the global grassroots movement of Slow Food International which generally aims at a so called good, clean and fair food system, even published a position paper on vegetarianism and veganism.<sup>7</sup> Among others the paper intends to harmonize different standpoints of the heterogeneous sociopolitical interests and personal networks being committed to the topic. Against the backdrop of the above foundational works and contributions to public discussions about vegetarianism, the purported right use of land and allegedly most appropriate ways of agriculture for individual, societal and environmental health including different political and ideological camps, the cause seems to be a quite young phenomenon. One would assume the origin of these thematic encounters in the 1970s which then have “grown” up to the intensity of the present time. However, a closer look to German history sheds light on a much older and different origin. Questions of eating vegetarian or much less animal source foods respectively, cooking with locally grown plant-based produce, going to vegetarian restaurants, setting up new models of land use and of rural community life without meat on the table as well as encountering the overall social and political challenges of the respective era “through” the lens of food and agriculture even hark back to the late 1860s.

Consequently, anyone who aims at better understanding the social complexities and political or ideological determinants of the current debates would do well in looking thoroughly at the historical roots of vegetarianism’s and land reform’s sociopolitical character in Germany. A certain historical consciousness for the deeply entangled links between the above sectors might contribute fruitfully to acknowledge the unquestionably challenging complexities of both national and global agriculture policy in and beyond Germany’s state boundaries, the

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<sup>7</sup> Cp. *Slow Food Deutschland e.V.*: Stellungnahme Slow Food Deutschland zu Vegetarismus und Veganismus, the positioning paper is available online via this link: [https://www.slowfood.de/w/files/themen/sfd\\_stellungnahme\\_vegetarismus\\_veganismus\\_2017.pdf](https://www.slowfood.de/w/files/themen/sfd_stellungnahme_vegetarismus_veganismus_2017.pdf) .

implied discussions about vegetarian food consumption in general as well as the vibrant societal encounters with food, land use and small-scale farming in particular.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, this Master's thesis investigates the societal and political aspects of both incipient vegetarianism and land reform activities in Germany. It poses the following research question:

**What was the specific political character of merging vegetarianism and land reform in Germany during its transition to the Imperial nation state? Was there one common sociopolitical message and goal of vegetarians and land reformers or did their societal field remain contested?**

For conducting the research it seemed to be very appropriate to take the first volume of Eduard Baltzer's book "Die natürliche Lebensweise. Der Weg zu Gesundheit und sozialem Heil"<sup>9</sup> as a systematic point of departure. Eduard Baltzer originally was a protestant pastor in the tiny town of Nordhausen in the former province of Prussian Saxony and became a liberal politician in the aftermath of 1848 and the revolutionary upheavals in the German territories. He still counts as the most important historical agent concerning the evolvement of vegetarianism in Germany.<sup>10</sup> His above book is of inestimable relevance since he was the first vegetarian in Germany and beyond who formulated a complex and extensive approach concerning the vegetarian diet. According to his multivolume writings, vegetarianism holistically encompassed the alleged impact of this kind of nutrition on the health of the environment, on human health and on the public social or political wellbeing in Germany respectively. Furthermore, his political activism as a liberal-minded agent who aimed at contributing to a future democratic and republican German nation state on the basis of claims on self-determination and as regarded "through" the lens of (vegetarian) food and agriculture is articulated by the book, too. Thus Baltzer introduced very political elements to the societal evolvement of vegetarianism as such in 1867. Moreover, this year marked another cornerstone since the activism of Baltzer and his first fellow campaigners on public vegetarianism caused the founding of the "Verein für natürliche Lebensweise" in Nordhausen, so to speak the first vegetarian club in Germany. While other even more radical agents referring to vegetarianism and political engagement in the late 1860s and 1870s like the

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<sup>8</sup> As an example of the topicality cp. the activities of "Meine Landwirtschaft", a coalition of 50 non-government organizations in Germany who even claim "Essen ist politisch" ("food is political"), cp. "*Meine Landwirtschaft*": <http://www.meine-landwirtschaft.de/>.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. *Eduard Baltzer: Die natürliche Lebensweise. Der Weg zu Gesundheit und sozialem Heil* vol. I, Nordhausen 1867, online available via this link:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433011660713;view=1up;seq=7>.

<sup>10</sup> Cp. *Judith Baumgartner: Vegetarismus*, in: *Diethart Kerbs/ Jürgen Reulecke (eds.): Handbuch der Deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880-1933*, Wuppertal 1998, p.132.

important Gustav Struve are treated adequately in the present work too, the preeminent role of both Eduard Baltzer in person and his above book has to be emphasized once more. It was not only a complex framing of vegetarianism in a societal and a political sense and an intellectual determinant for vegetarianism in theory and in practice which justifies the book's significance as a frequent point of reference. Even beyond these considerations Baltzer and his book respectively established a very specific subjective perspective and holistic consciousness. This refers to the role of soil fertility both for human health and for the use of land or agricultural productivity respectively. The former and the latter aspect among others played a crucial role in Baltzer's considerations on the so called health of society. In other words, he made soil fertility and land use relevant issues in the context of vegetarianism before any kind of land reform movement emerged in Germany. Hence this aspect must be consistently considered regarding the systemic structure of the present work. Furthermore, it is important to remark that the definatory power of the latter interconnected understanding which emanated from the Baltzer's book and was highly crucial for later vegetarian activism in society did not only remain on a more or less abstract meta level. Rather, Baltzer used his own holistic approach even for a definition of "natural food" and "eating naturally". Eating vegetarian and eating naturally were often used synonymously by the historical actors. Thus this understanding determined both food production and consumption within the paradigm of vegetarianism over the whole evaluation period of the thesis as it is shown in the research below. Nevertheless, Baltzer did not start his vegetarian activism in an intellectual void and did not elaborate all theories or practical measures on his own. Thus the most other relevant intellectual precursors, networks and persons beyond the above Gustav Struve are considered, too. Evidently, the subjective character of the book at the same time makes it a problematic historical primary source to be encountered and treated with a high degree of critical reflexivity.

As mentioned above, aspects of soil and land use are thematized for the first time in the context of Eduard Baltzer's holistic perspective on vegetarianism and thus gained a certain systematic influence in the investigation. Anyhow, the matter of land use in Germany of course had to be considered from a completely different point of departure, too. After all it was the founding of the German nation state in 1871 which among many others was a result of strong shifts and developments of the agricultural system and progressively caused tremendous phenomena of industrialization and urbanization. While the implied dissolution of the estate based-society precipitated new patterns of agricultural land in the countryside, the issue of land use gained new meaning in the overpopulated metropolises like Berlin.

There, land for both building houses and food production became very scarce due to the immense influx of workers and their families from the former East Elbian agrarian regions as well as due to financial speculation without restraint.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time changing patterns of food production, new consumption cultures and vegetarianism in particular became relevant factors in Berlin and some other big German cities. The so called Life reform movement encompassed many sectors and currents of societal reform and was very flexible or even vague concerning both its concrete goals and its epistemological character before the turn of the century. But astonishingly it had taken vegetarianism, a reform of food consumption and land reform as its more or less coherent dominant nucleus.<sup>12</sup> Therefore it seemed highly appropriate to use the paradigm of the Life reform movement for researching the coalescence of vegetarianism and land reform in urban areas referring to its respective sociopolitical goals. Due to the spatial, structural and definatory complexities of both reform camps it moreover made sense to focus on the local context of Berlin as far as geographic places within territorial Germany are concerned. Interestingly, the Life reform movement among others spawned agents like the naturopath Heinrich Lahmann who contributed some distinctive claims on soil fertility, agricultural land use and vegetarianism beyond confined places and settings to the discourse.<sup>13</sup> Thus his case counts as one good example of the Life reform paradigms' beneficial character for the present research. Furthermore, the overall zeitgeist of colonial expansion in Imperial Germany beyond its territorial boundaries partly covered both vegetarians and land reformers, too. This mainly rooted in the technical scarcity of land, specific images of colonized nature and a general yearning for an isolated rural life on the basis of agricultural self-subsistence.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, the global trajectories of these phenomena were taken into account whenever necessary and possible. In the wake of this ascertainment it appeared as being both inevitable and very welcoming to analyze the inception and the evolvement of Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden in Oranienburg close to Berlin. Firstly, a tradesman from Berlin was initially inspired by colonies of German vegetarians on a business stay in South America. Secondly, the founders of Eden, who were located on a fairly wide political spectrum, aimed

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<sup>11</sup> Cp. *Klaus Bergmann*: Agrarromantik und Großstadtfeindschaft, Meisenheim am Glan 1970, pp. 14-16 and cp. *Joachim Joe Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, so haben wir die Zukunft“. Die Obstbausiedlung Eden/ Oranienburg als alternatives Gesellschafts- und Erziehungsmodell (1893-1936), Berlin 2002, pp. 11-12.

<sup>12</sup> Cp. *Wolfgang Krabbe*: Die Lebensreformbewegung, in: *Kai Buchholz/ Rita Latocha/ Hilke Peckmann/ Klaus Wolbert (eds.)*: Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900 Bd. I, Darmstadt 2001, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Cp. *Heinrich Lahmann*: Die diätische Blutentmischung (Dysämie) als Ursache der Krankheiten. Ein Beitrag in der Lehre von der Krankheitsveranlagung und Krankheitsverhütung, Leipzig 1919<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Cp. *Bergmann*: Agrarromantik, p.88.



at setting up a reform-minded colony which should embody vegetarianism and land reform in an ideal-typical way. Obstbaukolonie Eden dropped the word “vegetarisch” in its name in 1901 as a matter of strategic choice.<sup>15</sup> In any event it is evaluated as the only successful and long lasting colony of Life reform in Germany by historians.<sup>16</sup> And the colony is even still existing today!<sup>17</sup> The release of “Die natürliche Lebensweise. Der Weg zu Gesundheit und sozialem Heil”, the founding of the first vegetarian club as well as the conspicuous policy shift of (Vegetarische) Obstbaukolonie Eden were very special events in the history of vegetarianism in Germany. Accordingly, it made a lot of sense to focus the period of investigation on the time from 1867 to 1901.

Following the above thread in content the thesis is divided into five chapters which in some cases again are divided into various subchapters.

Methodologically, the thesis is written from the standpoint of a classic approach to history. But wherever possible, global connections and transnational entanglements across micro-and macro scales and between single actors and abstract contents beyond sharp boundaries are taken into account. This approach shall neither be understood as blindly reproducing nor unreflecting or ignoring the “nation state box“ of the classic paradigm of Western history writing respectively. Rather, the contingent and fluid character of shifting and emerging political and spatial boundaries, particularly referring to the German territories, to the Imperial nation, to the state’s borders as such or to the spaces of reform colonies is permanently reflected. Moreover, the work in general and consciously intertwines dimensions of intellectual history with those of social and cultural history. For this example can be recognized in shape of the primary sources on the ideas of vegetarianism and land reform or in shape of the literature on vegetarian consumption within the Life reform movement respectively. All of this taken together, the thesis is written on a kind of epistemological middleground.

It must be reflectively remarked that a certain gender problematic proved to be true during the work on the thesis. All leading and influential historical actors in the investigation are men. But as becomes clear in the course of the research text, this mainly has to do with the fact that the milieu of vegetarians and land reformers was indeed strongly dominated by men. While women for example were leading authors of cookbooks from the genre of bourgeois cookery

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<sup>15</sup> Cp. *Judith Baumgartner*: Die Obstbaukolonie Eden, in: *Buchholz/ Latocha/ Peckmann/ Wolbert (eds.): Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe*, pp.511-512.

<sup>16</sup> Cp. generally *Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe*: *Aufbruch. Die Lebensreform in Deutschland*, Darmstadt 2017.

<sup>17</sup> The official name today is Eden Gemeinnützige Obstbausiedlung eG cp. <https://www.eden-eg.de/>.

which was based on meat to a very high degree, vegetarian cookbooks before 1901 were mostly written by men.<sup>18</sup> Needless to say, this indicates the power structures within the past social reality in the context of the topic. Wherever possible, relevant historical activities, measures or publications of women are integrated in the historical analysis.

In a rather technical sense it had to be consciously reflected during the work on the investigation- and as has still to be done consistently while encountering it- that historical concepts always remain fluid, contingent and are permanently renegotiated over time spans to a certain degree.<sup>19</sup> For instance the term “self-emancipation” surely had different connotations or possibly even modified meanings when it was used by the vegetarians of Obstbaukolonie Eden in 1901 in comparison with its usage by Eduard Baltzer in 1867. Depending on the concrete context, the term “sociopolitical” encompasses both the meaning of specific social or political measures and of political ideologies respectively.

It was the firm goal to cover the most relevant and available primary source material and a wide, heterogeneous spectrum of literature which ranges from the classic approach of national history to examples of global and transnational history. All in all it was intended to use the earliest and the most recent sources or literature publications on vegetarianism and land reform respectively which were evaluated as being appropriate and significant. Especially the work with the various primary sources was exerted as most critically and reflectively as possible. Scholars have published a quite large body of literature on the history of vegetarianism, of land reform and of the Life reform movement as such. Nevertheless, it seems quite striking that the vast majority of historians are either mainly looking at vegetarianism as a phenomenon of both ethical and consumption culture, at land reform as a counter reaction to the speculation on building land and on Life reform as attempt to reinvent the German society in a sociocultural sense. But scholarly approaches which look at the intertwined dimensions of vegetarianism and land reform and possibly mutual relevance of both for respective sociopolitical goals and changes remain a desideratum. Hence the present thesis intends to fill this lacuna to a certain degree.

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<sup>18</sup> Cp. e.g. *Judith Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich: 1871-1914- Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform?, München 1989, p 58.

<sup>19</sup> Cp. e.g. *Javier Fernández Sebastián (ed.)*: Political Concepts and Time. New Approaches to Conceptual History, Santander 2011.

Generally, Corinna Treitel's book "Eating Nature in Modern Germany. Food, Agriculture and Environment, c. 1870 to 2000"<sup>20</sup> was of inestimable inspiration for the work on the topic as it seems to be the first contribution which aims at researching the history of food, agriculture and environment in Germany in a thoroughgoing holistic way. Moreover, it initially informed the author of this thesis about Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden's existence and thus gradually paved the way for the topic of the thesis as such. During the research it soon became obvious that the scholar Judith Baumgartner is a distinct expert on the history of the Eden-colony and vegetarianism in Imperial Germany. Thus her various publications were of elevated meaning for the investigation. Particularly referring to the social structure and motivation of vegetarians and their clubs the historical and sociological analyses of Eva Barlösius appeared to be indispensable. The essential historical phenomena and developments of agriculture, food production and new patterns of (vegetarian) consumption in the wake of industrialization and urbanization in Germany would not have been researchable properly without the fruitful contributions of Hans Jürgen Teuteberg. Hence these authors deserve to be especially mentioned here. All in all the body of literature is represented by a quite balanced proportion of female and of male authorship.

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<sup>20</sup> Cp. *Corinna Treitel: Eating Nature in Modern Germany. Food, Agriculture, and Environment, c. 1870 to 2000*, St. Louis 2017.

## **I. Vegetarianism in Germany- its roots and its growth**

### **I.1. The sociopolitical and intellectual background of vegetarianism in Germany- leading agents, debates and determinants**

The question what Germans should eat evolved to be very much at stake in the aftermath of the revolutionary upheavals and demands of 1848.<sup>21</sup> Particularly in liberal political circles, whose adherents still seemed to remember the times of famine before the revolution and now feared the political implications of food insecurity, a lack of nutritious food was seen as a threat to society.<sup>22</sup> Generally, the 1840s had been a decisive period regarding an upcoming public consciousness and societal debates on human food consumption. The chemist Justus Liebig had contributed to the food- related agenda setting of the time by his discovery of protein. He had introduced it as the essential nutrient as such through his publications. The respective books promoted animal protein as the exclusive sire of human tissue and therefore as the indirect, but actually core origin of any physical work. Liebig drew the picture that meat, consisting of protein to a high degree, would therefore be the perfect basis for human nutrient supply. He marked the general overall conviction that meat again produces meat, an assumed fact which again would enhance both work force and economic productivity.<sup>23</sup> Influenced by this paradigm, among others the well-known Prussian liberal politician and medical doctor Rudolf Virchow gave specific lectures to workers in 1867- with the aim to address this audience both in nutritional and sociopolitical regards. In very general words he underlined that access to food and its further (culinary) preparation would be a basis for all human activity to such a high degree that beyond the individual level the society and the state would be deeply influenced by these factors. As he stated further, bread and meat as well as sugar and salt, beer and wine and tobacco and coffee are essential and influential resources. Allegedly, they either determine the level of wealth, affluence, peace and harmony in society and guarantee a stable life or indirectly lead to turmoil and disruption if not being available for the citizens' consumption. Generally, one of Virchow's most contested conclusions was his claim that the quota of meat-eaters in a nation state must be seen as an indicator for the degree of humanity of the respective nation.

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<sup>21</sup> for the phenomenon of hunger revolts during the years 1846-1848, especially in Prussia cp. *Manfred Gailus: Hungerunruhen in Preußen*, in: *ibid./ Heinrich Volkmann (eds.): Der Kampf um das tägliche Brot. Nahrungsmittel, Versorgungspolitik und Protest 1770-1990*, Opladen 1994, pp. 176- 199.

<sup>22</sup> Cp. *Treitel: Eating Nature*, p.19.

<sup>23</sup> Cp. *Corinna Treitel: How Vegetarians, Naturopaths, Scientists, and Physicians Unmade The Protein Standard in Modern Germany*, in: *Elizabeth Neswald, David F. Smith, Ulrike Thoms (eds.): Setting Nutritional Standards. Theory, Policies, Practices*, New York 2017, p. 53.

According to his view, Germany had to become a nation of meat-eaters as a prerequisite for becoming great and powerful.<sup>24</sup> These specific historical precursors for the sociopolitical role of food being carved out might make it easier for the present day reader to understand how particular standpoints on vegetarianism evolved in the debate. Because needless to say, such audacious claims and discussions regarding the relevance of animal protein provoked serious opposition. Even within the camp of the liberal scholars, who were all politically united by the aftermath of 1848, completely different standpoints were promoted. By all means, these just indicated debates about the societal impact of animal protein and meat- based food or plant-based food respectively function as a paradigmatic point of departure for the investigation of vegetarianism and land reform aspects in the context of the present paper's research question. The most important critic of a meat and animal protein-based diet was Eduard Baltzer, a protestant pastor, religious reformer and a liberal minded political activist in those years. He counts as highly important for the research of this paper and functions as one key actor in the investigation. Thus it seems indispensable and fruitful to step directly into his relevant intellectual contributions and to shed light on both his personal motivation and societal context before tracing the further sociopolitical evolvement of vegetarianism in Germany.

It was Baltzer's first volume of the book „Die natürliche Lebensweise. Der Weg zu Gesundheit und sozialem Heil“<sup>25</sup> in 1867 which was a decided response to Virchow's above indicated ideas and counts as a groundbreaking contribution to the debates about food and its social or socioeconomic link respectively. It again made clear that from Baltzer's view Germans would improve their bodily and mental health, extend their life expectancy and even utilize food consumption to make the nation healthier, more prosperous and more powerful by choosing a more natural and meatless diet. In his view, the increasing consumption of meat, sugar, caffeine and alcohol exploited agricultural resources so heavily that a social catastrophe would become the unavoidable consequence of the criticized lifestyle.<sup>26</sup> Without any doubt, until the late 1860s and by the time when the first volume of Baltzer's above work got published, the matter of food and diet generally had been elaborated and propelled as a central aspect in liberal democratic political circles. All actors who participated in the mostly scholarly debates associated both the social challenge of how to feed society after the experiences of hunger and scarcity in the wake of the revolutionary years around 1848 and the

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<sup>24</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, p.19.

<sup>25</sup> Cp. footnote 9.

<sup>26</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, p. 20.

implied question of how to guarantee social stability with the aspect of sufficient nutritional supply. The solution of this matter was seen as the essential precondition for an intended future republican state. Jacob Moleschott, a physiologist, the Swiss naturopath and pharmacist Theodor Hahn and the medical doctor Herrmann Klencke were the most influential characters in the debate in Germany next to the above mentioned Justus Liebig, Rudolf Virchow and of course Eduard Baltzer. Broadly speaking, they either belonged to the so called protein and meat camp respectively or to the adherents of a meatless diet- all of them amalgamated both the questions of physical human health and societal wellbeing from their respective standpoints in letters, lectures and disputes.<sup>27</sup>

Anyhow, the majority of these actors, particularly Baltzer, Virchow and Liebig, belonged to a distinct liberal political camp whose adherents intended a republican nation state in Germany. Thus their disputes originated in the different opinions how to fight hunger and to reach societal stability by the respective kind of food and diet, be it either animal protein- and meat-based or vegetarian. But as has become obvious so far as well, Eduard Baltzer was not the very first German speaking actor who officially published on meatless and so called natural diets. Some of the other protagonists of vegetarianism in Germany, for instance the teacher Johann Wilhelm Zimmermann or the above mentioned pharmacist Theodor Hahn received their impetus for vegetarianism or the societal matter of food respectively from a wider framework. As distinguished from them, Liebig, Virchow and many other adherents of the so called protein camp rooted their standpoints in pure academic research.<sup>28</sup> Zimmermann became a radical vegetarian after reading Jean-Jacques Rousseau's novel "Émile"<sup>29</sup> which was the latter's pedagogical major work and among others treats a meatless human diet and its relation to nature. Zimmermann himself even started publishing after meeting networks of already existing vegetarians on a journey through England.<sup>30</sup> Single actors like the German

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<sup>27</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: The Protein Standard, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> please generally note that this work treats (modern) vegetarianism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including some of its immediate roots. Theoretically, it would be correct to speak of a millennia-old ethical tradition with roots in Greek philosophy. In some Western European Countries and Germany it again step by step turned into a specific form of modern vegetarianism in the shape of movements with new intellectual spearheads and associations as its basis from the 1830s onwards. Firstly, the Greek origin of the vegetarian core idea for instance became obvious through naming it „Thalysianism“ (“Thalysianismus” in German- referring to a ritual for good harvests). Secondly, in some contexts vegetarianism was named “Pythagorean Teaching” until the 19<sup>th</sup> century which obviously picked up the ideas of the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras (580-500 BC) who is seen as the founder of ethical vegetarianism, Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus, pp.127-128.

<sup>29</sup> Cp. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*: Emil, Leipzig 1844- the free digitalized edition of the book (translated in German where it is called Emil) can be accessed via this link:  
[https://books.google.de/books/about/Emile\\_oder\\_%C3%BCber\\_die\\_Erziehung.html?id=KKU79eW0oEsC&printsec=frontcover&source=kp\\_read\\_button&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.de/books/about/Emile_oder_%C3%BCber_die_Erziehung.html?id=KKU79eW0oEsC&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>30</sup> Cp. *Hans Jürgen Teuteberg*: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus, in: Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 81 (1) 1994, p. 46.

book printer Emil Weilshäuser again got inspired by paperworks as those of Zimmermann and had started to translate vegetarian literature from England and the United States of America for the German language space. As Hans-Jürgen Teuteberg underlines in the context of personal networks, Eduard Baltzer particularly got sensitized for Theodor Hahn's statements and literature on vegetarianism and its positive impact on personal health as well as on societal life by a preacher of the so called Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde.<sup>31</sup> Already since the 18<sup>th</sup> century this pietist community again had intense contacts to Methodists in England and US-American free church congregations. Mostly, these circles radically rejected any consumption-oriented enjoyments of life as for instance eating meat and drinking alcohol. In general they preferred a materially simple life on the basis of reform.<sup>32</sup> Obviously, the upcoming discourse on vegetarianism had some strong roots in a global network which established some direct entanglements between both single persons and particular communities. It disseminated specific ideas on vegetarianism in a diffusionist manner from the Anglo-Saxon cultural space to the regional German territories. This predominantly happened through personal contacts, translation of specific fundamental works and other publications.<sup>33</sup> Apparently, these thoughts and ideas concerning a vegetarian lifestyle had been ushered into global trajectories via different ways and indirectly had inspired the above German actors. The standpoints stemmed from various protestant religious lifestyle cultures or from Enlightenment philosophers like Rousseau. Notwithstanding, these approaches were not particularly framed as being political.

But anyhow, and this has to be stressed to the reader emphatically here, Eduard Baltzer is regarded as one of the most influential and important historical German actors of vegetarianism by the vast majority of relevant scholarship.<sup>34</sup> Thus his work as an activist and author is of extraordinary meaning for the understanding of both the intellectual and structural foundations of vegetarianism in Germany as well as for being able to analyze vegetarianism's further appearances in political contexts. In his above quoted multivolume publication "Die natürliche Lebensweise" Baltzer explains thoroughly and via multifaceted accesses such as from the standpoints of human health, of the environmental dimension, of a state economy, of

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<sup>31</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 46-48 and cp. *Wedemeyer-Kolwe: Aufbruch*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>32</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg: Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus* p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> For further insight into activism of vegetarians in the Anglo-Saxon sphere during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century cp. e.g.: *Colin Spencer: Vegetarianism. A History*, New York- London<sup>2</sup> 2000, pp. 253-274.

<sup>34</sup> Cp. e.g. among others see *Wedemeyer-Kolwe: Aufbruch.*, p. 46 or e.g. *Eva Barlösius: Naturgemässe Lebensführung. Zur Geschichte der Lebensreform um die Jahrhundertwende*, Frankfurt am Main- New York 1997, p. 24 or e.g. *Judith Baumgartner: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel. Ernährungsreform als Teil der Lebensreformbewegung am Beispiel der Siedlung und des Unternehmens Eden seit 1893*, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Bern-New York-Paris-Wien 1992, p. 94.

theological, of philosophical or even of culinary perspectives in how far a more natural diet would benefit humankind collectively and individually. At the same time he advocates eagerly for the renunciation of meat, caffeine, alcohol and too much sugar and salt or goods like specific spices, other drink and tobacco as indicated above through the reference to the dispute with Rudolf Virchow. The latter products are simply considered as not being essential and rather ‘unnatural’, at least being additional, superfluous luxuries which reportedly influence human life in disadvantageous ways.

“ ‘Wie bei Pflanzen und Thieren, so sollten die Nahrungsmittel des Menschen eine indifferente Beschaffenheit und weder eine chemische noch eine besondere Wirkung auf den gesunden Organismus besitzen; sie sollten den Umsatz weder beschleunigen noch verlangsamen‘ “<sup>35</sup>. Herewith, Baltzer in a certain sense condenses his understanding of the term ‘natural diet’ which obviously focuses on the origin and the consistency of a specific food product. Furthermore, the quote underlines the preference for chemically unmodified food, and by relating to plants and animals as reference points, it does so for nourishments which should be as close to its ‘natural state’ as possible. This understanding of “natural food” systemically contributed to the foundations of both vegetarian thought and activism due to Baltzer’s above mentioned authoritative role in Germany and therefore is highly suitable for us as readers to keep it in mind while engaging ourselves with the following parts and chapters of this work. Beyond that, Baltzer even tried to substantiate his opinion about the thoroughgoing meaning of the vegetarian diet by reaching out to the human organism. By digressing to the scientific field of zoology in a would-be professional manner in his major book Baltzer compares the masticatory apparatus and the alimentary canal of the human being with that of specific animal species. To put it in a nutshell, but to carve out the potentially important meaning for later vegetarians, Baltzer concludes that the human being is a fruit-eating species by nature and claims that the essential structure of the human body suits perfectly for a vegetal diet.<sup>36</sup> According to his view, human beings usually tend to follow their instinct for consuming healthy and adequate food in line with their natural disposition for the latter (far beyond rationally knowing what is good as food and what is not) as long as this natural instinct is not perished by wrong habits of the respective social environment. Concerning people who eat meat Baltzer exactly asserts such a case of a forcefully spoiled habit and perversion of the natural status. The latter effect in his opinion can of course still be found if one looks at pristine little children who allegedly would have to be pushed to

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<sup>35</sup> Cited in *Baltzer: Natürliche Lebensweise*, p.1.

<sup>36</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 24-28.



consume meat rather than taking it voluntarily. Baltzer elaborates the assumed merits of fruits, vegetables and plants for human consumption but sharply excludes eating eggs next to meat and anything that stems from a killed animal (including fish) from an acceptable human diet.<sup>37</sup> Thus it seems salient that milk from animals and therewith made dairy products are fully appreciated: “War die Muttermilch einst unser Alles, so sagen wir uns, daß die Milch der Thiere, als das Verwandteste, uns heilsames Nahrungsmittel sein wird, nebst Allem, was sich daraus (Unverdorbenes) bereiten läßt[!].“<sup>38</sup>

Particularly if one considers both the role of Eduard Baltzer within the sphere of the intellectual trailblazers for vegetarianism in Germany and the ambiguous meaning of the term “natural diet” or which food is to be subsumed to the latter respectively, these food related differentiations seem to be crucial for the further investigation. Regarding the present paper’s research question and its holistic backdrop of food and land matters it seems worth mentioning that Eduard Baltzer throughout his early but basic work narrates the above topics in both a quite programmatic and would-be scientific way. By making recourse to his appreciation of human mother’s milk he claims that this milk contains, as researchers allegedly had found out, all elements of human blood which again would underline breast milk’s capacity to feed a person exclusively. Moreover, wheat and potatoes are supposedly haemopoietic and contributive to physical heat generation whereas pulses like peas, lentils and beans are still unjustifiably underestimated in Baltzer’s regard. Although a distinct racist political meaning is not directly brought across, it moreover seems remarkable that Baltzer quotes the US-American preacher and vegetarian activist Sylvester Graham. The latter had stated that the farmers of Lancashire and Cheshire are famous for being the supposedly most beautiful so called race of England due to their mainly potatoe- and buttermilk- based nutrition.<sup>39</sup> At the same time it should not be neglected that Baltzer generally regarded the reference to so called racial and national differences between human beings as disadvantageous rather than helpful. As for him, the vegetarian cause in its deepest core was inclusive, humane and pacifist.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of Baltzer’s concrete intention to quote Graham, this example indicates that the consumption of particular food and its impact on the human bodily appearance got a certain racial connotation in those years. Subsequently, Baltzer amplifies his narrative on the above supposed interrelations between plants, their nutritious

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<sup>37</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 33-34 and pp. 37-38.

<sup>38</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>40</sup> Cp. *Wolfgang R. Krabbe: Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform. Strukturmerkmale einer sozialreformerischen Bewegung im Deutschland der Industrialisierungsperiode, Göttingen 1974, p. 156.*

elements and the human body or blood respectively by creating an interesting analogy to the agricultural cultivation of land and soil. Accordingly, farmers and gardeners allegedly know that every plant variety needs certain conditions to be fulfilled. Baltzer relates these conditions to the climate, to the kind of soil, to the surrounding humidity and moreover states that some elements of the soil are more fertile, others are less and are rather detrimental. Thus a well balanced crop rotation and the adequate input of the right nutrients and so called plant-based food would be indispensable for the soil. In Baltzer's eyes, these effects are valid for human beings in the same functionality as for agricultural soil since humans are reportedly fruit consumers by nature (as mentioned above). Hence they would simply represent a higher organism than soil, but are equally dependent on the input of plant-based nutrients and are entangled with the ground they live from. Therefore they have to be supplied with adequate 'natural' food products like fruits, vegetables etc. at an appropriate rate.<sup>41</sup> Against the backdrop of the immense influence of Eduard Baltzer's above mentioned multivolume edition of "Die natürliche Lebensweise. Der Weg zu Gesundheit und sozialem Heil" on the later evolving vegetarian milieu it seems important to put on record here that he regarded a well balanced combination of peas, lentils, beans, sweet chestnuts, rice, potatoes, corn as well as of cereals, different vegetables and fruits as suitable for the daily human diet.<sup>42</sup>

Beyond this, the above presented core standpoints of Baltzer at least strongly insinuate a certain interconnected organic understanding of plants, nutrients, the human being as such and arable soil. Thus the embeddedness of the former into the latter on a presumed both biological and socio-philosophical meta-level emerged as one point of departure of Baltzer's intellectual activities. It seems natural that this specific paradigm might have been crucial for the essential self-placement of vegetarian consumers and activists within agricultural paradigms and respective sociopolitical debates. In any event, Baltzer was the first one who provided a holistic perspective which explicitly interwove aspects of a vegetarian diet and matters of soil and land cultivation while locating the human being ontologically at its center. Against the backdrop of his above mentioned outstanding influence we can assume that this particular lens or access respectively was bedrock for later vegetarians.

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<sup>41</sup> Cp. *Baltzer*: *Natürliche Lebensweise*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>42</sup> Cp. *Baltzer*: *Natürliche Lebensweise*, pp. 46-47.

## **I.2. Specific locations, areas and new structures- the first associations and concrete frameworks for the development of vegetarianism**

Concretely, Eduard Baltzer transferred this approach of regarding soil, nutrition and the access to plant-based food for human beings to his immediate social, economic and geographic environment. This became obvious when he elaborated his responses in the above mentioned debates with Rudolf Virchow of how to feed hungry workers and how to gain sociopolitical stability. Nordhausen, a town of the at that time province of Prussian Saxony where he was active as a pastoral leader of a religious free congregation movement<sup>43</sup>, served as a welcome frame of reference. Therefore, focusing on the town and its food-related context for a while, helps us as present age observers to trace back the inherent role of matters of land and soil within the evolvement of 19<sup>th</sup> century vegetarianism in shape of a particular example.

Reportedly, Nordhausen was surrounded by a very fertile, cultivated and highly productive grain producing area and was the fourth-largest city in the province. Population had more than doubled from the beginning of the century until the late 1860s and many people got work on farms as well as in factories. They again transformed agricultural goods like grain, potatoes, hops or sugar beets into sugar, alcohol or fodder for livestock.<sup>44</sup> Because of its immense general agricultural productivity, Nordhausen and its modern industrial sites which often also processed meat, in a certain way depicted the overall shift of consumption in Germany toward far more meat and other so called unnatural products as alcohol, sugar or the like since the 1840s. For instance, meat consumption had risen massively all over Germany until 1867 and the following years. This fact is particularly documented for the kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony due to a special meat tax which had to be paid there by producers.<sup>45</sup> In Nordhausen and elsewhere, the increase of industrial productivity, especially around the province's growing factory sites where sugar beets got processed into white sugar for trade export, and the change of land use patterns propelled a twofold phenomenon. Firstly, agrarian businessmen speculated on huge profits through the sugar production. They therefore bought up big areas of land which automatically enhanced land prices, concentrated huge surfaces in the hands of few owners and made it often unavailable for small farmers. Secondly, the use of beets and pulp residues for animal feed, increasingly emerging as a business factor too, massively triggered off animal livestock farming and thus meat production.<sup>46</sup> These effects,

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<sup>43</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, p.28.

<sup>44</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Cp. *Hans Jürgen Teuteberg/ Günter Wiegmann*: Nahrungsgewohnheiten in der Industrialisierung des 19. Jahrhunderts, Münster<sup>2</sup> 2005, pp. 105-118.

<sup>46</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, pp.34-35.

primarily the enormously high costs of meat production and consumption in relation to plant food and bread, again served as a provocative backdrop for Eduard Baltzer. He interlinked his above claims on the vegetarian diet, the human body and the role of soil with a wider both agricultural and socioeconomic context. It was concretely the matter of land use as a source of food production on which Baltzer shed light. Nevertheless, he was not the first one again who regarded this specific issue. Rather, he drew on analyses of Alexander von Humboldt among others. Humboldt already had addressed the indirect competition between human being and cattle livestock when it came to the production of food or feed for either the one or the other much earlier for the first time. In other words, Baltzer precisely reformulated, problematized and highlighted the following: ten people eating plant based food could supply themselves from a wheat field. By contrast, one person who nutritiously lived from one cow which again would need to be fed by the same wheat field alone thus used the same surface of land for food. Huge amounts of legumes, crops and cereals first got transmuted into animal meat as a food source for humans although beans and pulses could directly nourish people in a much cheaper and ‘natural’ way. By addressing and questioning this circumstance he brought to the fore that it needed many harvest seasons to raise cattle for slaughter but only one season to cultivate crops and plant for human consumption.<sup>47</sup>

It is crucial to realize that Eduard Baltzer’s first two volumes of “Die natürliche Lebensweise” insistently catalyzed, disseminated and in a way reshaped these above standpoints. They became constitutive of contemporary vegetarians worldview and a wider public.<sup>48</sup> Evidently, the local realities of Nordhausen concerning agriculture and the use of land as well as the conditions of meat production in particular influenced Baltzer emphatically. All these aspects became a constituent part of his argument for a vegetarian diet and therefore marked the readers of his books all over the German territories. Another very important aspect for the understanding of the vegetarian movement’s partly sociopolitical origin seems the fact that highly influential agents as Eduard Baltzer equipped this kind of diet with a strong political, possibly even with an ideological impetus. As Corinna Treitel for example shows in some of her scholarly works, Baltzer applied the rhetoric of the revolutionary and liberal republican zeitgeist of his social circles directly to vegetarianism as percolated above in the context of the dispute with Virchow. In Baltzer’s opinion, a vegetarian diet opens the way to personal and political independence which is the basis for human life and a precondition to liberate oneself. This got allegedly pertinent insofar as the pure, natural and simple way of a

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<sup>47</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>48</sup> Cp. *Treitel*:The Protein Standard, p. 55.

vegetarian living would keep people from following solely capital driven interests and the destruction of the public good.<sup>49</sup> He possibly associated the latter observation with the money-oriented industrialization of agriculture and the exploitation of soil as he had stated for Nordhausen. Moreover, for him, by framing the fate of the workers and the society's wellbeing as a public good it was clear that „[...] only material serving the public good should be produced, that productive consumption [that is, consumption productive of the general good] is the most useful. Here we have not just a rule to be followed by the individual [...] but also a truth that a free state must follow in its laws. Fulfilling sensible needs was ,the way of reason, of self- governance, of freedom, of efficiency, of humanity.‘ Reforming consumption, in other words, was the path to individual emancipation and national self-determination.“<sup>50</sup>

As can be obviously recognized, he regarded vegetarianism, carried out by the individual human being as well as the social organization of this diet, as the essential basis for an intended future republican nation state in Germany. Nevertheless, Baltzer's identity as a Christian theologian and his role as the pastoral leader of the Nordhausen free church movement must not be neglected at all. Even to a greater degree it must be analysed on an essential and relevant dimension when investigating the roots of vegetarianism in the light of the thesis' research question. To put it briefly, Baltzer had a very free and liberal understanding of religion as such and of his Christian faith in particular. Core pillars of this more or less systematic theological perspective seemed to be general aspects like love, truth, human reason and contemporary claims of nature science. The free congregation movement aimed rather at abolishing Christianity in favor of a new religion than just reforming Protestantism or the respective church as such.<sup>51</sup> Baltzer and his fellows and followers wanted to further establish the Enlightenment's achievements like theological freedoms against the Prussian state church and were called "Lichtfreunde" (friends of the light) in the vernacular.<sup>52</sup> For them, "reason" (Vernunft) became a guideline for obtaining "truth" (Wahrheit) on their way of life. Again, reason and truth were seen as indispensable premises of individual self-determination and sovereignty. The intended new religion of the congregation should focus on the body as the home for soul and spirit. It was the soul or spirit which again should be educated in each individual's "temple" (the human body) by truth and eternal reason- the

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<sup>49</sup> Cp., *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>50</sup> Cited in *Treitel: Eating Nature*, p.32.

<sup>51</sup> Cp. *Tobias Kaiser: Eduard Baltzer (1814-1887)- ein enttäuschter 1848er-Revolutionär als Gründer des ersten deutschen Vegetarierversins?*, in: *Stefan Gerber/ Werner Greiling/ Tobias Kaiser/ Klaus Ries (eds.): Zwischen Stadt, Staat und Nation. Bürgertum in Deutschland*, Göttingen 2014, pp. 438-439.

<sup>52</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg: Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus*, p.48.

former and the latter being the alleged essence of a so called real God. Thus it was seen as religious to appreciate the value of the daily bread and to live in harmony with nature. Coherently, vegetarianism and eating ‘natural’ food counted as religious as it was rational. It was regarded as rational since it was natural and being natural in Baltzer’s eyes meant to form the body according to nature’s laws which again stemmed from God. Consciousness for the self and consciousness for God and religion seemed to become one dimension.<sup>53</sup>

Baltzer was convinced that vegetarianism would be the key to a revolution in both individual and societal human life. Consequently, it would therefore be simply rational in a religious and social sense to follow the path of vegetarianism. As it seems, it was the conflation of these convictions and assumptions, mostly the religious sense of mission and the theological considerations of the free church group which in a way prepared the next level of vegetarian activism. Together with Louise Belitski, a well-known photographer, Adolf Vocke, a gardener, Thekla Naveau, a pedagogue and Selmar Müller, the publisher of the Nordhausen newspaper- all being members of the so called “Lichtfreunde” free church group and having become vegetarians through Baltzer’s charismatic work<sup>54</sup>, he founded the so called “Verein für natürliche Lebensweise” in April 1867. It was the first association of a natural lifestyle (which implied a vegetarian or meatless diet to a high degree).<sup>55</sup> Beyond his food-oriented activism in shape of the above mentioned intellectual disputes with Virchow and Liebig as side effects of the debates how to fight hunger and to gain social stability, Baltzer emerged as a politician in the classical sense. For a certain time he already had become a delegate to the Frankfurt pre-parliament and subsequently even deputy of the Prussian national assembly.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, one of his friends, the social liberal Herrmann Schulze-Delitzsch, who politically advocated for self-help associations for workers in the context of the above indicated “worker question” and how to feed those groups of society, had inspired Baltzer decisively. This became palpable insofar as Baltzer connected the idea of emancipation with the reform of consumption and got more acquainted with the approach of societal self-organization under the umbrella of associations.<sup>57</sup> Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt ascertain that “associations in general- voluntary societies, cercles[!], Vereine- were each in their distinct way characteristic of bourgeois sociability and forms of action in Europe during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. They were crucial to the articulation of a

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<sup>53</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, pp. 32-33.

<sup>54</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>55</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg*: Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus, p. 48.

<sup>56</sup> Cp. *Kaiser*: Eduard Baltzer, p. 434.

<sup>57</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, pp. 30-31.

middle-class presence in public life, of particular importance in Germany where associations created a public sphere independent of the state”<sup>58</sup>, still a time when the German nation state had not yet been founded.<sup>59</sup>

This zeitgeist of specific middle-class activism apparently influenced the first groups of vegetarians in Germany and got mirrored in the founding of the “Verein für natürliche Lebensweise” in 1867, too. It might exactly be the above scholars’ analysis of the associations’ societal role which counts for Baltzer and his fellows. Baltzer could now transfer his theologically and politically rooted sense of mission to the promotion of the vegetarian lifestyle in the public sphere on an institutional basis. By May 1869, the “Verein für natürliche Lebensweise” consisted of more than a hundred members. Additionally, publishing a periodical for members of the association and its friends aimed at the integration of the first groups of vegetarians. At the same time it intended to set the basis for proactive propaganda work in society.<sup>60</sup> Another very important protagonist and pioneer of vegetarianism in Germany and its sociopolitical evolvement was the lawyer Gustav Struve. Although not being as directly enmeshed into academic discourses on the advantages and drawbacks of a vegetarian lifestyle and its dietary physiological aspects as Eduard Baltzer, Struve definitely belonged to intellectual spearheads of vegetarianism, too.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, it seems inevitable and contributive for understanding the vegetarians’ political aspirations to shed some light on the essential strands and statements of Struve’s activism. Similar to the above mentioned teacher Wilhelm Zimmermann, Struve originally got inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s novel “Émile”<sup>62</sup> and its message on the necessity to renounce on animal slaughter due to the moral superiority of a vegetarian diet. Even before fleeing to the United States of America because of his participation in the Badense Uprising in the 1830s, Struve

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<sup>58</sup> *Geoffrey Crossick/ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt*: The petite bourgeoisie in Europe 1780-1914. Enterprise, Family and Independence, London and New York 1995, p. 210.

<sup>59</sup> On the aspect of associations of different thematic focuses as political spaces for their activists who demanded a liberal constitution Geoff analyses that “given the survival in Central Europe of pre-national state forms- petty monarchical and aristocratic jurisdictions of one kind or another- the real work of constituting the ‘nation’ had to be conducted in opposition to the existing sovereign authorities by private rather than public bodies, and by civil initiative and voluntary association rather than by government- in brief, by the political action of the people organized as potential citizens. In other words, the process of proposing the category of the German nation was identical with the growth of a public sphere, with the ‘nation’ conceived simultaneously as a new political community of citizens.” See *Geoff Eley*: Liberalism, Europe, and the bourgeoisie 1860-1914, in: *David Blackbourn/ Richard J. Evans (eds.)*: The German Bourgeoisie. Essays on the social history of the German middle class from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, London and New York 1993, p. 302.

<sup>60</sup> Cp. *Wolfgang R. Krabbe*: Gesellschaftsveränderung, p. 58.

<sup>61</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, pp. 42-43.

<sup>62</sup> Cp. footnote 29.

had written the novel “Mandaras Wanderungen”<sup>63</sup>. It is regarded as trivial from a standpoint of literature but counts as one of the first tendentious texts on vegetarianism in Germany.<sup>64</sup> In the wake of Struve’s revolutionary activism of 1848/49 he had become a delegate to the Frankfurt pre-parliament like Baltzer and had crossed ways with him in this political sphere of liberal activists. Struve literally politicized the vegetarian nutrition. He identified the plant based diet as a proven remedy in (political) times and moments of peace and war, in freedom, in prison as well as while studying or when being on stage as a speaker.<sup>65</sup> Being a radical political agent for governmental democratization and liberalization on the intended way to a republican German statehood, Gustav Struve framed vegetarianism as the adequate and holistic tool for social change. The scholar Marc Cluet remarks that Struve almost preached a pure plant based diet as a would- be gospel and was convinced that vegetarianism inherently implies a politically relevant brotherly love or altruism. As some sources indicate, Struve even established a very temporary kind of vegetarian rural settler colony in Yorkshire, England where any meat, tobacco and alcohol was prohibited.<sup>66</sup> According to a synchronic historical local dynamic and regardless of Eduard Baltzer’s activities in Nordhausen and the “Verein für natürliche Lebensweise”, Gustav Struve founded the “Vegetarische Gesellschaft Stuttgart” (Stuttgart Vegetarian Society) together with 20 like-minded persons in 1868 after having come back to Germany from his US-American exile.<sup>67</sup> Just shortly thereafter, in 1869 Struve published his book “Pflanzenkost. Die Grundlage einer neuer Weltanschauung”.<sup>68</sup> It is seen as an important contribution to the theoretical foundation of the upcoming broader vegetarian movement in Germany in those years. Especially beyond the sphere of professional literature and such texts as those of Baltzer which often were rather marked by the above mentioned academic discourses on nutrition, “Pflanzenkost” was regarded as being much more accessible for a wider public.<sup>69</sup> According to his own report Struve had noticed gatherings of Christian vegetarian pietists in London and New York during his time in exile. Hence he maybe had realized that the idea of vegetarianism supplied the potential for a social

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<sup>63</sup> Cp. *Gustav Struve: Mandaras Wanderungen*, Leipzig<sup>3</sup> 1906. The published version is available online via this link: <https://archive.org/details/mandaraswanderu00strugoog/page/n4>.

<sup>64</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner: Vegetarismus*, pp.131-132 and cp. *Teuteberg: Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>65</sup> Cp. *Krabbe: Gesellschaftsveränderung*, p. 54 and cp. *Treitl: Eating Nature*, p.44.

<sup>66</sup> Cp. *Marc Cluet: Vorwort*, in: *ibid. /Catherine Repussard (eds.): „Lebensreform“*. Die soziale Dynamik der politischen Ohnmacht. La dynamique sociale de l’impuissance politique, Tübingen 2013, pp. 18-19.

<sup>67</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg: Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus*, p.46.

<sup>68</sup> Cp. *Gustav Struve: Pflanzenkost. Die Grundlage einer neuen Weltanschauung*, Stuttgart 1869, the book is available online in a digitalized version via this link: <https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10474938.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Cp. *Krabbe: Gesellschaftsveränderung*, p. 55.



movement in Germany, too.<sup>70</sup> This probably again functioned as a fertile soil among others to found the above “Vegetarische Gesellschaft Stuttgart” whose social life again triggered his work as an author on the topic: “So blüht und gedeiht unser Stuttgarter Verein, und diese Schrift kann als eine der Früchte desselben bezeichnet werden [!].<sup>71</sup>” This apparent inner connection between the association’s activities and the literary result in shape of the book might be one reason for Struve’s obvious attempt to elaborate the overall alleged societal amenities and advantages of the vegetarian diet along a very broad spectrum of individual and societal life. In the book he for instance touches family life, cookery, agriculture, philosophy and fundamental political statuses like peace and war- but in a less academic, less physiologically related and less metaphysical manner than Eduard Baltzer’s writings. It seems particularly important that Struve regarded vegetarianism as an essential prerequisite for the society’s and even literally the humanity’s ability to reform other parts of life, too.<sup>72</sup> Thus vegetarianism apparently got a pivotal role for any social change in his eyes. Eduard Baltzer’s above depicted focus on the human self or the individual as the starting point for a change of societal consumption patterns and self-emancipation as well as Gustav Struve’s appeal to start any food- related reform from the mental and physical condition of oneself as the point of departure<sup>73</sup> corresponds well with one of Judith Baumgartner’s scholarly remarks. She convincingly states that the activism of the first vegetarian protagonists in Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was driven by *the individual*. Corresponding to her, the personal commitment of the mostly liberal activists fulfilled a sociopolitical proxy function due to limited possibilities of propelling immediate political change in the time before the foundation of the German nation state.<sup>74</sup>

As can be recognized directly and indirectly, the theologian Eduard Baltzer, the lawyer and political activist Gustav Struve, the naturopath and pharmacist Theodor Hahn and the teacher Johann Wilhelm Zimmermann all got a relatively high level of education. Thus they at least were endowed with the chance of a more or less stable social and economic civic middle-class socialization compared to many other people of the time. On the contrary, workers, peasants and other subaltern groups with only a very limited access to education or societal institutions in many cases had suffered from hunger problems. They were far less privileged concerning the capacities to become a social activist than the vegetarian leaders. Notwithstanding and as

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<sup>70</sup> Cp. *Struve*: Pflanzenkost, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>72</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>73</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus, p. 131.

seen from a systemic standpoint, the vegetarian pioneers turned away from their original professions and committed the ways of daily life to their would-be ethos of vocation to the establishment of vegetarianism. This automatically implied that they acquiesced to put their profession-related societal integration and material security in jeopardy.<sup>75</sup> At the same time the avowing for the above mentioned liberal republican virtues was a clear social marker of a more or less distinct bourgeois social belonging in those decades. All of them increasingly inclined to holistically systematize the whole conduct of life according to the ideas and values of vegetarianism and apparently put it as an unquestionable revelation. Moreover, it probably might be interpreted as well as a matter of class affiliation or social stratification that they did not understand social phenomena and challenges as to be encountered socially or socio-structurally in the context of hunger or of processes like industrialization, but as a task for the individual person.<sup>76</sup> In their view the question being at stake rather was how every person could contribute to a socially and environmentally balanced community life through the individual way of a (healthy) lifestyle. In any event the above impression of their specific individualist thought gets cemented. Following Eva Barlösius, it was exactly the latter phenomenon which provided a particular religious quality to their vegetarian ideas and reframed their life's journey as a kind of prophetic mission rather than as a life which stuck to the potentially available and socially quite secure higher middle- class milieu. As resulting of Barlösius' sociological consideration it is not far to seek defining first and foremost Eduard Baltzer but as well the other above agents as leading "prophets" of early vegetarianism in Germany. Evidently, it was them who put the respective lifestyle at the heart of their mission. They conceived their ideas as an epiphany with a religious character and created a systemic order for a vegetarian way of life being based on certain inner ethical values which should help to reshape the exterior world.<sup>77</sup>

But even beyond the transcendental connotation of modern vegetarianism it generally had a secular character being immanent in the world much more than highlighting "reason" as a motivation. The conviction was, following a would-be kind of natural law, that killing animals would brutalize the human being and this would lead to the killing of humans and war respectively. Food was seen as influencing the soul and the plant-based diet as soothing the human emotions. Against the backdrop of an alleged brutalization by eating meat it might have appeared as highly paradoxical that not all vegetarians and club members fully

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<sup>75</sup> Cp. *Barlösius*: *Naturgemässe Lebensführung*, pp. 85-87.

<sup>76</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>77</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 90 and p. 93 and cp. *Krabbe*: *Die Lebensreformbewegung*, p. 26.

renounced on meat. The concept of being a vegetarian did not stem from the word vegetable but from the latin term “vegetus” which again has to be understood as “healthy” or “fit”. Thus it primarily was a kind of the natural, healthy consumption style which some vegetarians tried to follow rather than the criterion that every single member of the scene would never eat any meat or fish. Nevertheless, the absolute majority of vegetarian activists and club members, first and foremost Baltzer, Struve and the other “prophets” adhered to a meat- and fishless diet. Dairy products were mostly framed in the above quoted sense of Eduard Baltzer.<sup>78</sup> Indeed all the officially leading agents and pioneers of early vegetarianism were male. Anyhow, women like Amalie Struve, the wife of Gustav Struve and other committed women who as well stemmed from the upper urban middle-class milieu, paved the way for the practical social implementation of the vegetarian idea next to the pure membership in networks like Lichtfreunde or the Verein für natürliche Lebensweise. For instance, these women publicly advocated for vegetarian children’s homes and gave cooking classes on a voluntary basis.<sup>79</sup>

### **I.3. Industrialization, urbanization and changing landscapes- reforming agriculture and food**

The German nation state of 1871 had not only emerged from the deep changes due to so the called Prussian and military “revolution from above” as a consequence of three wars within six years. Rather, it was founded in a time which was marked by the end of a specific agrarian revolution taking place over a few decades and by the breakthrough of the industrial revolution to the full extent at the same time. This phenomenon seemed to be unique compared to the founding processes of all other occidental nation states.<sup>80</sup> As had already been triggered by the failed political revolution of 1848/49 and the growing industrial revolution from the 1850s onwards among others, the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in general was a time of massive change and transformation in Germany. Beyond the processual political unification on the way to Imperial Germany in 1871 it was mainly the socioeconomic transformation based on industrialization and urbanization which marked this era and implied many demographic and cultural shifts, too. For a better basic understanding of the complex processes of urbanization and industrialization of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the context of food and the present research it seems appropriate to adduce Teuteberg’s condensed description of urbanization. “In essence, urbanization is: 1) The social upheaval of a change in centre of

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<sup>78</sup> Cp. *Krabbe*: Die Lebensreformbewegung, p. 26 and cp. *Florentine Fritzen*: Gesünder leben. Die Lebensreformbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt am Main - Stuttgart 2006, p.41.

<sup>79</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus, p.135.

<sup>80</sup> Cp. *Hans-Ulrich Wehler*: Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918, Göttingen 1994<sup>7</sup>, p.19.

gravity of the population from agrarian to urban, together with a large general population growth. 2) A shift from an agrarian economy to one based on industry and the service sector. 3) A new social structure exhibiting at the same time both regional and social mobility. 4) The diffusion of a modern urban mentality to the whole society and culture”<sup>81</sup>. Pauperism and the revolutionary dynamics of 1848 had caused massive hunger problems mainly in the countryside and provided the original backdrop for the above debates on nutrition and vegetarianism of Virchow and Baltzer among others. These (political) reasons evidently had been overcome by the founding of the nation state to a certain degree and had been swiped away by the first tremendous wave of industrialization thanks to certain interior migration from rural sites to upcoming industrial centers. Being even more relevant now, a second enormous wave of industrialization as well implied a second wave of interior migration from agrarian regions to industrial urban areas in the 1870s. It mainly took place via great distances from the very eastern German territories to the west.<sup>82</sup> Precisely, it was the emerging industry sector and factory areas, primarily in the fast growing cities of the Ruhr region in the west or around metropolises like Berlin which demanded for myriads of workers and employees. These were the concrete most influential factors which precipitated domestic migration of big scope. Particularly the poor rural population of eastern German regions which were marked by agricultural settings and very often by a powerful social hierarchy with landowners at its top, were attracted to migrate to the big cities.<sup>83</sup>

Just to underline the intensity of these overall effects it might be worth knowing that between 1860 and 1925 between 22 and 25 million people left their place of birth to areas beyond their German territorial state’s or province’s borders respectively. Within these entities numbers were even higher. In 1871 two million people lived in cities and urban spaces, in 1910 this number had increased to 14 million whereas the population numbers in the rural parts of the country remained approximately 26 million in the same time period. Only between 1871 and 1910 the number of German cities with more than 100.000 inhabitants rose from 8 to 48. Never before in German history there had been such a decisive shift referring to the topographic structure and to social milieus.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Hans Jürgen Teuteberg: Urbanization and Nutrition: Historical Research Reconsidered, in: *Peter J. Atkins/ Peter Lummel/ Derek J. Oddy (eds.): Food and the City in Europe since 1800*, Hampshire/ England, Burlington /USA 2007, p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> Cp. *Bergmann: Agrarromantik*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>83</sup> Cp. *Scholz: „Haben wir die Jugend, so haben wir die Zukunft“*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>84</sup> Cp. *Bergmann: Agrarromantik.*, pp.18-20.

In the countryside, especially in the East Elbian regions of Germany, the official abolition of aristocratic landowners' specific rights and the alleviation of their privileges regarding the land law (concerning property, socage and levies), the personal law (concerning serfage and hereditary subjection and the conflict settlement (concerning the jurisdiction) had been brought by the zeitgeist of the industrial revolution. This obviously changed the formal options of the village inhabitants and actually made possible to move to western areas as mentioned above. Nevertheless, many informal ties and dependencies of the lower class and lower middle -class rural population on the still socioeconomically powerful landowners remained. For the latter the formal dissolution of the old order even made possible to reject inconvenient duties stemming from their feudal responsibility, to extend their land property and to increase economic effectivity thanks to wage labor. Between 1811 and 1890 the agricultural land surface of mostly noble estate owners even got enlarged by two-thirds. These effects of rationalization not only increased food mass production and thus made possible to supply food for the growing population in total. It also enhanced economic competition with foreign states which in total again precipitated import and export of grains etc.. Hence land prices had tripled only until 1875.<sup>85</sup> Evidently, this must have privileged either socioeconomically powerful landowners in the rural areas or evolving industrial elites and factory owners in the urban areas, where increasingly more land was needed to build up production sites.<sup>86</sup> The phenomenon of urban industrialization, the landowners' enlarged land access and the further development of food mass production equally influenced the food consumption and the social living conditions of the vast majority of people tremendously. In a certain sense the above specific setting of Nordhausen where Eduard Baltzer had elaborated his theories on vegetarianism in a way seemed to have been a small-scale structural harbinger of this development. But of course these effects of changing food consumption were not only precipitated by the above scholars' public disputes and by the shifts of land use patterns.

During those last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or in the first years of the imperial German nation state respectively, single weekly markets, fairs and pedlars were not able to supply the food demand of the population in the fast growing cities anymore. It was the above mentioned mass migration from the countryside, where most families had been accustomed to produce

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<sup>85</sup> Cp. *Wehler*: Das Deutsche Kaiserreich, pp. 20-21 and for further reading on the situation in the East Elbian regions related to the contemporary academic discourse e.g. cp. *Gerd Vonderach*: Landarbeiterfrage im ostelbischen Deutschland, in: *ibid.* (ed.): Landbewohner im Blick der Sozialforschung. Bemerkenswerte empirische Studien in der Geschichte der deutschen Land-und Agrarsoziologie, Münster-Hamburg-London 2001, pp. 43-53.

<sup>86</sup> On the character of agriculture in Imperial Germany and a broad overview generally cp. *Rita Aldenhoff*: Agriculture, in: *Roger Chickering* (ed.): Imperial Germany. A Historiographical Companion, Westport USA 1996, pp. 33-61.

their own food but had cast it off and had become dependent on the urban market system due to their labor wages which boosted the growth in demand. Moreover, increasing wages nourished the wants of many working class members to improve their diets. Apparently, in the majority of cases they were willed to set aside many other consumption wants like housing, clothing and hygiene in preference for food consumption and pleasures. Historians and statisticians found out that the effect of price increase for pork, sugar, beer- some of the goods which Eduard Baltzer despised so much - but as well as the price increase for potatoes and bread was much slower than the increase of salaries. This eventually facilitated the consumption of many other commodities.<sup>87</sup> Corresponding to the so called Engel's law<sup>88</sup>, the rise of incomes over a certain time period causes a decline of money sums which are spent on food by the single consumer proportionately. Concerning the availability of food, new consumption patterns as well as concerning economic market dynamics it seems highly important to understand that the rapidly growing demand for food has to be regarded in one context with the improvement of agrarian productivity, the use of new chemical fertilizers, the creation of garden allotments and the general mechanization of society. Historically, it was a new phenomenon that the evolving modern transport and communication system thanks to a growing network of railways, telegraphs and the use of steam ships made possible to carry foods like meat or cereals instead of only luxury goods from tropical areas from one continent to the other. It was a new experience that these new economic circumstances successfully propelled the competition with domestic products due to cheap prices.<sup>89</sup>

In cities with more than 100.000 inhabitants soon only one central weekly food market could not fulfill the needs of the customers anymore. As a result, several submarkets were installed. For instance in Berlin in 1885 there were 20 submarkets in different neighbourhoods which encompassed 10.500 market stalls, the biggest in the city centre was one of 1.500 stalls. Another new phenomenon of this time was the invention of so called central market halls. There the food stalls could be protected from the weather, dirt and shifting temperatures thanks to the steel and glass constructions as well as by the first cooling or heating systems respectively. The infrastructure of these market halls was well connected with streets, railways and the water supply system. Food from production areas in the suburbs and villages around or via greater distance could be provided quite easily. At the same time the growth of the cities automatically transformed the suburbs and villages in the respective vicinities, often

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<sup>87</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg*: Urbanization and Nutrition, p.15.

<sup>88</sup> Cp. a precise definition of (Ernst) Engel's law e.g. see online via this link: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/Engel-s-Law.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg*: Urbanization and Nutrition, pp. 15-16.

the rural atmosphere vanished. Consequently, it became more and more necessary to bridge greater transport distances for securing the urban food supply. The development of the urban-rural food supply system went hand in hand with the expansion of road and railway networks.<sup>90</sup> In the context of the present paper it seems especially worth remarking that in those years specific tradesmen were active to garner all marketable foods in the vicinities and prepare its transportation. The negative effect of this practice was that both in the cities and the surrounding villages people who still practiced subsistence farming and lived on the basis of self-sufficiency were increasingly marginalized. Of course it was appreciated that these tradesmen enabled constant supply of fresh food to the city in huge quantities. But at the same time it was criticized that they unnecessarily made food more expensive for the end consumer because of being a third interlink in the supply chain and due to establishing new market dependencies to the detriment of the consumer.<sup>91</sup> Next to the increasing productivity of food production and agriculture it was a noticeable improvement of the medical standards which made population numbers doubling in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beyond the above phenomenon of domestic migration to the cities, this effect was mainly measurable in urban agglomeration areas.

Obviously, the social structure of the German society shifted tremendously in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The estate-based society got transformed into a class society, in the economic metropolises a new urban industrial proletariat became part of the social reality. Poor wages for unskilled workers, heavy working conditions and very confined housing conditions for big families in overcrowded backyards and quarters marked daily life in the big cities. Especially the demand for housing and construction places limited the availability of free land and propelled prices of the latter to hitherto unknown levels.<sup>92</sup> Rapid industrialization and urbanization, implying the above problems like poor living conditions, limited housing and land availability as well as both the socially and legally volatile situation of workers or working class families respectively caused palpable counter reactions in society. In a nutshell, these general circumstances as well as these particular social groups provided a welcome breeding ground for various approaches of reform- the so called „social question“ emerged as both a societal issue and challenge.<sup>93</sup> For making us as nowadays' spectators able to understand why and in how far the aspect of available land and soil for both living space

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<sup>90</sup> Cp. *Hans Jürgen Teuteberg*: Zum Problemfeld Urbanisierung und Ernährung im 19. Jahrhundert, in: *ibd.* (ed.): Durchbruch zum modernen Massenkonsum. Lebensmittelmärkte und Lebensmittelqualität im Städtewachstum des Industriezeitalters, Münster 1987, pp. 17.

<sup>91</sup> Cp. *ibd.*, p.18.

<sup>92</sup> Cp. *Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, haben wir die Zukunft“, p.12.

<sup>93</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p.20.

and doing agriculture gradually became a factor for the sociopolitical meaning of vegetarianism in Germany, it seems necessary to shift the standpoint now for while. Far beyond the context of mass grain and meat production or beyond Eduard Baltzer's claims, we have to look thoroughly to the dominant situation regarding available land. This has to be done from the social perspective from below instead of simply taken the utilization of land and space by evolving factories as a given reality.

## **II. The land reform movement- another way of rising to the social and political challenges of the time**

It was exactly a setting of such strong forces in which Adolf Damaschke was born in a rental barrack in Berlin in 1865. His parents had to sell the tiny family's house in the suburbs of Berlin to wealthy speculators and to surrender their carpenter workshop due to being trapped between capital-driven businessmen and public interest for the ground.<sup>94</sup> The young Damaschke had lived there during childhood with his father, the carpenter and his mother, a nurse. They became fully exposed to the overwrought speculation for building land and ground of the so called founder's years in the wake of the above social and economic transformation in the German society. Thus the family had to move from one neighbourhood to the next while permanently encountering violence, alcoholism and other excesses in the social environment of artisans and workers. This group often suffered tremendously from the respective living conditions.<sup>95</sup> Being marked in such a context, Damaschke strived to escape these realities and made his way to preparatory school and a certain seminary for municipal school teachers in Berlin. This laid the groundwork for his career in both education and public social activism. The latter commitment, mainly thanks to his campaign for free learning materials brought him in contact with radical workers' associations, socialists, economists, philosophers, playwrights, doctors and with many members of Berlin's circles which advocated for social and cultural reform in the late 1880s.<sup>96</sup> Just a few years before, in 1879, the US-American social theorist and economist Henry George had published his work "Progress and Poverty".<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> On the issue of housing conditions, living culture and social milieus in Germany in the years from 1880 onwards e.g. generally cp. *Adelheid von Saldern*: "Daheim an meinem Herd...". Die Kultur des Wohnens, in: *August Nitschke/ Gerhard A. Ritter/ Detlev J.K. Peukert/ Rüdiger vom Bruch (eds.): Jahrhundertwende. Der Aufbruch in die Moderne 1880-1930, Bd. 2, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1990, pp. 34-60.*

<sup>95</sup> Cp. *Kevin Repp*: *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity. Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890-1914, Cambridge (Massachusetts)/ London 2000, p. 69.*

<sup>96</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>97</sup> Cp. *Henry George*: *Progress and Poverty. An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth. The Remedy, Cambridge 2011, a digitalized version of the book is available*



In the book he had picked up some suggestions of the first loosely organized land reform movements which again had burgeoned since the 1830s in England. George elaborated alleged key solutions for a society with increasing excesses of poverty amid growing wealth and prosperity. In his opinion, the ground rents of both building and agricultural land were the roots and reasons for all poverty in cities and urban areas. Saying it in concise words, George's goal was to avoid individual enrichment through landownership by the introduction of a certain tax on the ground rent. He assumed that the absorption of this tax by the respective government could both obviate the need of the state to expropriate land or to raise any other taxes for the cause of fighting poverty and land speculation. Similar to the above dynamics of the dissemination of the first modern thoughts and texts on vegetarianism and suggestions to approach sociopolitical matters through the lens of a reformed way of food consumption, Henry George's ideas were adapted in many countries.<sup>98</sup> The ideas circulated in the global personal trajectories of interested activists and in some places even directly triggered the founding of land reform societies. In the German speaking world, George's book became a source of inspiration for authors such as the Austrian Theodor Hertzka, Franz Oppenheimer and education activists like Adolf Damaschke who often were additionally motivated by their autobiographic backgrounds. They further adjusted George's theories to specific national or local settings or even became leading heads. For instance Damaschke temporarily became president of the reform-oriented "Deutscher Bund für Bodenbesitzreform" (German League for Land-Ownership) later in 1892.<sup>99</sup> Similar to the first institutionalization of the vegetarian thoughts and societal perspectives in shape of the above presented "Verein für natürliche Lebensweise" in Nordhausen, land reform interests apparently got manifested in associations from now onwards as well.

Henry George essentially claimed that the blooming industry and certain factory branches in society as such propelled the revenues from increasing land values and that consequently these revenues had to be transferred back to the public community to the end that modern development would be fostered. In spite of that, he did not regard individual persons as being responsible for the societal deficiencies. Both such intellectual key contributions as those of George and front row activism as such of Damaschke were more and more welcomed by the general public and the adherents of the growing particular movement on land reform. Beyond

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online via this link: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/progress-and-poverty/78D308F0085DEAA42C1F51E1C01EEDCF>.

<sup>98</sup> Cp. *Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen/ Hartwig Berger*: Bodenreform, in: *Diethart Kerbs/ Jürgen Reulecke* (eds.): *Handbuch der Deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880-1933*, Wuppertal 1998, pp.265- 267.

<sup>99</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp.265- 267 and cp. *Repp*: *Reformers*, p. 76.

any theory the problems as well as potential solutions became directly palpable. The dire circumstances were spawning increasingly more slums with very poor conditions of housing, bad hygiene standards and even with deficient access to adequate nourishment and food supply like for example in Berlin- Kreuzberg.<sup>100</sup> At the latest when Adolf Damaschke had become the president of the Bund für Bodenbesitzreform, a happening which rather originated in more or less coincidental developments due to his public social activism on education, he fully identified that land reform as such would offer the feasible core solution to the social question he was on the quest for.<sup>101</sup> Against this backdrop and due to his personal activism respectively, he easily attracted more and more followers coming from craftsmen circles like construction workers, tailors, shoemakers and even small shopkeepers or teachers.<sup>102</sup> As distinguished from Damaschke, the industrialist Michael Flürscheim reached another segment of the social spectrum with his contributions on land reform. He intellectually had blended the land reform theories of the rather liberal above Henry George with those of the clear socialist Adolf Wagner. The latter was a radical activist who again promoted to nationalize any land-ownership and property. Flürscheim attracted followers from the camp of progressive industrialists, social democrats and left liberal politicians for the cause of fighting the above social dislocations through reforming the urging matters of land use.<sup>103</sup> Evidently, the cause of land reform inherently and on its own accords at this time contained a very political character. This simply must have reasoned in land reform's rootedness in the above mentioned social and economic phenomena. Again, the latter appearances affected the whole society independent on the specific accesses to land reform discourses. This was relevant far beyond the question whether the proposed steps to be taken had a rather liberal or a rather socialist stance.

Furthermore, the above mentioned Theodor Hertzka's and Franz Oppenheimer's intellectual contributions to the questions of how to solve the dark sides of industrial capitalism through the lens of land reform- although bearing some sharp differences and literally following different directions- seem to be of crucial meaning for the present research. In 1889 Hertzka wrote a novel-like utopia of ideal-typical communities with free access to unsettled land called "Freiland, ein sociales Zukunftsbild"<sup>104</sup>. He proceeded on the assumption that land of

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<sup>100</sup> Cp. *Meyer-Renschhausen /Berger: Bodenreform*, p. 271.

<sup>101</sup> On Adolf Damaschke's perspectives and ideas from an edited historical primary source e.g. critically cp. *Adolf Damaschke: Die Bodenreform. Grundsätzliches und Geschichtliches zur Erkenntnis und Überwindung der sozialen Not*, Jena 1911<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p.75 and cp. *Meyer-Renschhausen /Berger: Bodenreform*, p. 271.

<sup>103</sup> Cp. *Krabbe: Gesellschaftsveränderung*, p.33 and cp. *Repp: Reformers*, p.75.

<sup>104</sup> Cp. *Theodor Hertzka: Freiland. Ein sociales Zukunftsbild*, Leipzig 1890.

affordable prices did not exist for cooperative-based communities all over Europe. His conclusion and emphatic recommendation was to organize settler groups and to take allegedly free land in overseas European colonies. These ideas became very much highlighted and even initiated further creative plannings in some urban groups. For instance some Jewish young people in Berlin collected money and attended English courses only for being able to found a socialist Jewish settler community on the basis of land reform ideas in Kenya. Although this project could never be installed successfully, it is important to realize that it exemplifies some land reformers' impetus to merge their ideas and wants with the contemporary lust for building up colonial communities abroad.<sup>105</sup> Anyway only after the release of Hertzka's above mentioned novel next to the Jewish circle in Berlin, 38 people gathered to found so called "Freilandgemeinschaften" and "Freilandvereine" in Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Prague and Budapest. On a congress in Frankfurt am Main even plannings for another expedition to East Africa were started. It was intended to do some preparatory work for seriously founding the so far fictional "Gartenstadt Edenthal" in Africa. The latter had been conceptualized profoundly as a so called European ideal- typical garden city regarding a green, aesthetic, healthy, hygienic as well as a plant-based food supplying infrastructure in the colonial space by Hertzka in the novel.<sup>106</sup> Against this – still fiction-based but very detailed backdrop-historian Catherine Repussard, again making recourse to the work of postcolonial theorists like Homi Bhaba, even recognizes the coalescence of land reform thought and the ideology of colonialism in a theoretical "third space". In this paradigm, contemporary ideas of living in harmony with nature, of social progress and of a so called alternative modernity which does not lack conventional politics sometimes were combined in utopian ways roughly from 1890 onwards.<sup>107</sup>

Among others Hertzka's claims on the need to take ground for land reform settlements in the colonial space abroad appeared as a serious intellectual challenge to Franz Oppenheimer. Thus he rather elaborated profound thoughts on establishing land reform and cooperative-based settler communities on the original territory of the German nation state or, on a more abstract level, in the so called Old World of (territorial) Europe. In "Freiland in Deutschland"<sup>108</sup>, a distinct rebuttal in writing to Hertzka's ideas, Oppenheimer explicated in

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<sup>105</sup> Cp. *Meyer-Renschhausen/Berger*: Bodenreform: p. 266.

<sup>106</sup> On the so called "Gartenstadtbewegung" in Imperial Germany e.g. cp. *Patrice Neau*: Die deutsche Gartenstadtbewegung- Utopismus, Pragmatismus, zwiespältige Aspekte, in: *Cluet/ Repussard (eds.)*: Lebensreform, pp. 211-224.

<sup>107</sup> Cp. *Catherine Repussard*: Lebensreform im Schatten des Kilimandscharo: Freiland von Theodor Hertzka (1890), in: *Cluet/ Repussard (eds.)*: Lebensreform, p.268.

<sup>108</sup> Cp. *Franz Oppenheimer*: Freiland in Deutschland, Berlin 1895.

how far the founding of land reform colonies within Germany would positively influence prices of land and soil, ground rents and people's wages. By theoretically promoting how to undermine the capital-based economic system and to deprive the state of its social and economic power basis according to him it was not necessary to nationalize all property or even to capture state power. He assumed that it was exactly large scale land-holding and immense private property in the hands of few, as for instance in the case of the above mentioned East-Elbian estate owners, which led to poor wages for agricultural workers, to domestic migration from rural to urban areas and to the immiseration of many people in big cities who then became the industrial proletariat. Essentially, Oppenheimer reached out to a third categorical dimension beyond capitalism or communism. The medical doctor, economist and sociologist stated that it would be possible to achieve the goal of disempowering owners of large land –holdings by buying land collectively in a community, holding and cultivating it in cooperatives and by supplementing the farming or agricultural work with other trades and services.<sup>109</sup> He was convinced that material welfare and social security would evolve much easier in rural agricultural cooperatives than through any kind of work in a capital-driven company, an industrial site or a large estate. Although considerations on agriculture and (self-sufficient) food supply played an inherently important role in the developing land reform scene, vegetarianism as such apparently had not yet been identified as the preferred indirect agriculture or food consumption pattern to interconnect the potential land with. This aspect only here and there started to flare in the discourse now.

At the same time Adolf Damaschke and the “Bund für Bodenbesitzreform” in favour of municipal communities and the general public demanded measures such as specific increment value taxes, the extension of laws to expropriate land for municipalities and the fixing of construction plans. It was intended to take into account hygienic, ethical or aesthetical aspects explicitly. He even advocated for the planning of a type of the above mentioned garden cities on a cooperative basis. Particularly Oppenheimer's ideas met with a very positive resonance in those societal groups being conscious for the above discourses and for food reform or vegetarianism respectively. Circles of land reformers and vegetarians started to cross ways and to get in exchange about the perspectives on reform. Among others, a relevant setting was

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<sup>109</sup> Cp. *Meyer-Renschhausen/Berger: Bodenreform*, p. 267, many years later, in 1933, Oppenheimer further elaborated his land reform approach of a certain middleground to more extreme extents by juxtaposing communism and national socialism and presenting his perspective as a third way in between cp. *Franz Oppenheimer: Weder so-nach so. Der dritte Weg*, Potsdam 1933, mainly pp. 42-72.

the so called Friedrichshagen-circle<sup>110</sup> which met in a street bar in Leipziger Straße in Berlin on a regular basis. It attracted a heterogeneous group of all kinds of people to debate about the challenging social and cultural implications of industrialization in Germany in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Both Oppenheimer and Damaschke, independent of each other, gathered there with many people of all kinds of background, they were united by the overall interest in societal reform. As literature indicates, the spectrum ranged from women's activists, socialists, naturalists to an assumingly growing group of vegetarians as well as many others.<sup>111</sup> Obviously, Oppenheimer and Damaschke mingled with socialists and communists in the reform-oriented Friedrichshagen-circle. Nevertheless, it clearly and once more has to be differentiated that the these two important German activists politically belonged to the civic or middle-class land reform camp being marked by the work of Henry George rather than belonging to the camp of distinguished 19<sup>th</sup> century communist approaches of land reform. The latters' intellectual masterminds Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in opposite allegedly had demanded the expropriation of all more extensive private land property under the umbrella of their well-known manifesto, but had not explicated how to carry it out.<sup>112</sup>

Beyond its immediate social dimension, industrialization, urbanization and the massive socioeconomic change of course had intense impacts on nature, landscape and environment, too. The intervention into nature was technically more restricted and most often both regionally and temporarily limited before the time of industrialization. Now population growth, the increase of production rates and the extension of factory sites caused a deep ceasura. This for example had become graspable in an almost ideal-typical way by the convergence of environmental, agricultural and industrial effects in Nordhausen as depicted above. In this sense, the local setting of the town and its agricultural environment obviously functioned as a political fertilizer for Eduard Baltzer and the "Verein für natürliche Lebensweise" with its statements on agriculture and food consumption. The ongoing pollution of the environment, the exploitation of natural resources as well as many people's growing

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<sup>110</sup> For a general insight into both social heterogeneity and dynamics of the Friedrichshagen-circle e.g. cp. *Gertrude Cepl- Kaufmann/ Rolf Kauffeldt*: „Natureinsamkeit bei brausender Weltstadt“. Der Friedrichshagener Dichterbund und die Neue Gemeinschaft in Berlin, in: *Buchholz/ Latocha/ Peckmann/ Wolbert (eds.): Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe*, pp. 515-520.

<sup>111</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 268 and cp. *Repp*: Reformers, pp. 73-74.

<sup>112</sup> Cp. *Andreas Dornheim*: Bodenreform und Siedlung. Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede, Kontinuitäten und Brüche, in: *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 2 (52) 2003, p.80 and for further reading on these matters e.g. cp. *Michael Silagi*: Henry George and Europe: Precursors of Land Reform in Germany: Marx and the Land Question: The Beginnings of the Georgist Movement in the Empire, in: *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 51 (2) 1992, pp. 250-253.

indifference to the fate of nature due to prioritizing economic improvement and regarding nature as a functional, utilisable space were salient phenomena of the era.<sup>113</sup>

### **III. Vegetarianism and land reform under the umbrella of the Life reform movement**

This new zeitgeist implied that the outer control and utilization of nature necessarily must discipline the inner mental nature as well as the physical power of the human being. Work efficiency, productivity, the needs and benefits of economic growth as well as a certain inurement to modern life allegedly had to be obtained. But at the same time the above described societal countermovement was a result, too.<sup>114</sup>

As the scholar Judith Baumgartner condenses, the most palpable and observable overall sociopolitical counter reaction to the negative impacts and phenomena of industrialization was the complex, so called Life reform movement. As can be indirectly recognized, it among others had roots in the political and intellectual void in the aftermath of the above indicated failed revolution of 1848/ 49 and now got corroborated by the social dislocations of industrialization.<sup>115</sup> Baumgartner defines the core part of the Life reform movement as a new understanding of nature, of the individual human being, of society and of the will to reform the so called unnatural life and working style of the again so called civilized society. Accordingly, anti-progressive and both the above anti-urban and socio-critical standpoints were closely interwoven with the ideas of Life reform. Through this wide socio-cultural and -political lens all dimensions of human life got intellectually and practically interconnected with nature and environment. The consequence was a holistic demand of a so called return to nature.<sup>116</sup> Generally, “ ‘Getting back to nature’ and the ‘natural lifestyle’ were, rather, ways of organizing the urban everyday”<sup>117</sup>. Forming a social reality over many more years, the concept „Life reform“ just became a steady byword throughout the 1890s. Nevertheless, we have to understand and to bear in mind that its definatory scope remained inherently flexible and unstatic. This scope ranged widely from understanding Life reform as a natural lifestyle against the ills of civilization and industrialization, among others expressed by nudism or certain ways of fashion or as an especially healthy lifestyle connected to food, nutrition and land. As well it embraced a perspective which explicitly framed Life reform as a way to push

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<sup>113</sup> Cp. *Thomas Rohkrämer*: Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland 1880-1933, Paderborn 1999, pp. 120-121.

<sup>114</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p.121.

<sup>115</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p.20.

<sup>116</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 20-21 and cp. *Avi Sharma*: Wilhelmine nature: natural lifestyle and practical politics in the German Life-reform movement (1890-1914), in: *Social History* 37 (1) 2012, p. 36.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

sociopolitical changes and transformation by putting a *reform* of food and land at both its theoretical and practical centre.<sup>118</sup> As Florentine Fritzen on the other hand remarks, Life reform and both its intellectual currents and its movements were not only the result of and the reaction to modernization processes in a onesided manner. Rather, Life reform itself was a modern approach which created modernity. It allegedly did so by a specific reform-oriented forward-thinking while trying to differentiate itself from the conventional idea of modernity and its logic of progress in shape of industrialization and urbanization. Thus Life reform was not simply a reaction but a proactive way of its own accord.<sup>119</sup> First of all, urban middle-class intellectuals felt challenged to respond to any kind of alleged degeneration as caused by industrialization, urbanization, global colonialism and individualization. Unsurprisingly, it was mainly this social group which (again) had the powers of self-assertion to imagine and propel this discourse of striving back to a “natural” state of affairs or a “natural” lifestyle proactively and thus became engineers of the Life reform movement.<sup>120</sup> At the same time, these economic, societal and cultural verberations and shifts, taking place within and beyond the state boundaries of the Kaiserreich, caused what Rüdiger vom Bruch among others calls “nervöser Idealismus” (nervous idealism) within Life reform . Since the educated middle-classes were dominating this wide ranging, heterogeneous movement, they were affected by this state of mind and mentality in the sense of vom Bruch’s analysis to the highest degree.<sup>121</sup> Needless to say, hence the even more or less established leading social agents of reform apparently had to cope with a certain permanent state of insecurity and socio-psychological fragility.

In any event, urbanization, industrialization and technization of the economy of the era were very thoroughgoing realities for any social stratum. As could be exemplified by the above case of changing food supply patterns in Berlin too, the sector of agriculture and food production got fully embraced as well. The emerging branch of industrial food production not only caused a radical change of food supply (including its production, processing, transportation distribution and culinary consumption), but food turned out to be in the centre

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<sup>118</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p. 22 and cp. *ibd.*: Ernährungsreform, in: *Kerbs/ Reulecke (eds.)*: Handbuch Reformbewegungen, Wuppertal, p.117.

<sup>119</sup> Cp. *Fritzen*: Gesünder leben, p.31 and for a good, concise overview of how scholars and historians regard and read the functionalities of the Life reform movement in Germany cp. *Edward Ross Dickinson*: Not So Scary After All? Reform in Imperial and Weimar Germany, in: *Central European History* 43 (1) 2010, pp. 158-161.

<sup>120</sup> Cp. *Karl Braun/ Felix Linzner/ John Khairi-Taraki*: Avantgarden der Biopolitik. Jugendbewegung, Lebensreform und Strategien biologischer „Aufrüstung“, in: *ibd. (eds.)*: *ibd.*, Göttingen 2017, p. 15.

<sup>121</sup> Cp. *Rüdiger vom Bruch*: Wilhelminismus- Zum Wandel von Milieu und politischer Kultur, in: *Uwe Puschner/ Walter Schmitz/ Justus H. Ulbricht (eds.)*: Handbuch zur „Völkischen Bewegung“ 1871-1918, München- New Providence- London-Paris 1996, p. 3 and p. 7.

of the structural shifts on Germany's development towards a modern consumer society. Whereas grains, legumes and (since the 18<sup>th</sup> century) potatoes had been the basis of the population's daily nutrition before, the age of industrialization shifted the focus of nutrition from many carbohydrates and a high fibre diet to a diet of much more industry- processed food. The latter dominantly consisted of fat and animal protein. Thanks to new technical and chemical procedures like pasteurisation, the facilities to create a vacuum, food colouring and cooling methods as well as by the invention of the can for conservation, the spectrum of available food products got immensely widened.<sup>122</sup> Eating meat at any given opportunity and to choose convenience food was seen as an enrichment by the societal majority which was not encompassed by the umbrella of the Life reform scene. Still, the activism of vegetarians and their clubs represented a particular minority. For many people eating meat and choosing convenience food either became an element of a newly evolving lifestyle or a tool to organize daily food consumption much easier. This attitude especially has to be interpreted against the urban background that many people worked in factories separately from their home for instance.<sup>123</sup> Analogously and at the same time closely interconnected to the overarching Life reform movement and vegetarianism in particular, specific ideas of reforming agriculture and food emerged. Those were a clear and distinctive response to the rapidly increasing consumption of meat and industrially processed food products.<sup>124</sup>

Among others, the above mentioned texts on vegetarianism and eating „naturally“ by Eduard Baltzer and Gustav Struve as well as the founding of the vegetarian clubs and evolving land reform movement belonged to this counter current to the industrialization of agriculture and food. Always keeping its original strands of moral, ethical or partly even religious considerations, anyhow modern vegetarianism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century first and foremost was marked by aspects of health, and even more important for this paper, by ecologic considerations.<sup>125</sup> The latter and the former aspects for instance got mirrored in the above disputes between Virchow and Baltzer and in the considerations on land use for industrial development or the production of either animal feed or human food. Thus vegetarianism at the latest from the end of the 1880s onward became a kind of holistic lifestyle with a deep-seated political element. As we know, it originally was not a particular result of the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Cp. *Hans Jürgen Teuteberg*: Die Geburt des modernen Konsumzeitalters. Innovationen der Esskultur seit 1800, in: *Paul Freedman (ed.): Essen. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Geschmacks*, Darmstadt 2007, pp. 241-244.

<sup>123</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform, pp. 116-117.

<sup>124</sup> Cp. *ibd.*, p. 117.

<sup>125</sup> Cp. footnote 28 for a differentiation.



century<sup>126</sup> but surrendered its status as an isolated world view very fast now and got consistently embedded in the Life reform movement. Being an inherent part of the latter, vegetarianism became core part of all considerations to reform *food*.<sup>127</sup> Wolfgang Krabbe firmly points out that vegetarianism and approaches to reform both food production and consumption together were the dominant nucleus of the Life reform movement, the latter encompassing the other above mentioned currents of reform as minor ones. The scholar underlines in this context that terms such as “natural lifestyle” or “healthy, reasonable way of life” became synonyms for Life reform and essentially summed up vegetarianism. Beyond that and as has been emphatically indicated above, vegetarianism and food reform were frameworks to articulate certain sociopolitical goals of land reform, housing reform, settlement reform or the goals of the temperance movement against the consumption of alcohol. Thus it is indispensable and essential to put on record that “diet was a red thread, perhaps the only thread, that could be found throughout the tapestry of life reform.”<sup>128</sup> Being highly important for the structural understanding of this research, Krabbe goes so far as to state that vegetarianism in the 1890s gradually started to represent elements of land reform, housing reform as well as other reform currents and embedded them in its partly global paradigm.<sup>129</sup> As he elaborates moreover, vegetarianism showed many congruences with socialism since it strived for a secular state of blessedness on Earth. At the same time it had to be distinguished from socialism since vegetarianism always related the idea of reform as such to the individual human being. According to this above introduced view and to be differentiated here once more, sociopolitical transformation could and can only be reached through the change of personal attitudes by the individual. Thus any sociopolitical change would be a result of (any) human being’s transition to a so called natural lifestyle which among others had become a central object of Eduard Baltzer’s publications.<sup>130</sup>

Referring to the respective epoch of the evaluation period in this research and its ideological interlinks, on the one hand vegetarians and land reformers so far were marked by some common driving forces. On the other hand their activism either articulated the inherited liberal virtues concerning the human individual as such and self-determination or the inherently collective element of socialist thought. Accordingly, points of departure were different but partly were made to converge on its application level by the intention of societal

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<sup>126</sup> Cp. *ibd.*

<sup>127</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner: Vegetarismus*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>128</sup> *Treitel: Eating Nature*, p.57.

<sup>129</sup> Cp. *Krabbe: Lebensreformbewegung*, p.26.

<sup>130</sup> Cp. *ibd.*, p. 26.

reform. After all even more related to practice, being available for everybody who was interested in *reform* and containing direct recipes instead of purely doctrinal texts on vegetarianism were for example the pioneering “Vegetarianisches<sup>131</sup> Kochbuch für Freunde der natürlichen Lebensweise”<sup>132</sup> (Vegetarian Cookbook for Adherents of the Natural Lifestyle by Eduard Baltzer and “Emil Weilshäuser’s illustriertes vegetarisches Kochbuch”<sup>133</sup> (Illustrated Vegetarian Cookbook) by Emil Weilshäuser himself. They even went through multifold editions until the turn of the century. Weilshäuser’s book suggests that “his” cuisine and the natural cookery of the time completely builds on fresh fruits and vegetables, being home-grown in small local gardens and then processed or cooked in a simple do-it-yourself-like way. To depict the food as stemming from a kind of counterworld to the continually industrializing food supply structures as outlined above probably was a helpful narrative to reach vegetarians. Whereas more Germans, the ones who had no access to the milieu of vegetarians, of course ate more meat thanks to the industrialization of agriculture and food supply structures, agents like Baltzer and Weilshäuser in their cookbooks overarticulated the full exclusion of meat and the massive reduction of formally allowed animal products like milk or cheese. Therefore, their recipes might have been perceived as having missed the spirit of the time by the general majority of German consumers. But paradoxically, it was exactly the new technologies from long-distance transportation to cooling techniques which were the result of industrialization, urbanization and the so called nutritional revolution making possible to cook with fruits from overseas for instance.<sup>134</sup>

Another effect was that even the accepted animal products like milk and cheese were made cheap and partly even overabundant to non-farming urban consumers. Anyhow, vegetarians and natural cookery as such kept an eye on confining non-meat animal food ingredients since human health, nature and land would be overexploited by it. This context constituted a reality far beyond romanticized images of local self-sufficient agriculture and actually made available fruits like fresh lemons, oranges or pineapples or any manufactured, conserved local produce beyond its natural harvest season. Thus natural cookery and the evolvement of reform-oriented convenience food like fruit and vegetable soups, sauces and desserts in cans

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<sup>131</sup> Regarding the German term „vegetarianisch” please note that the Greek origin of the vegetarian core idea for instance became obvious through naming it „Thalysianism“ (“Thalysianismus” in German- referring to a ritual for good harvests) which was used next to the German term „Vegetarianismus“ in Germany. There „Vegetarismus“ was used only from the 1880s onwards while „vegetarianism“ remains the English term until today cp. *Baumgartner: Vegetarismus*, p. 128.

<sup>132</sup> *Eduard Baltzer: Vegetarianisches Kochbuch für Freunde der natürlichen Lebensweise*<sup>37</sup>, Leipzig 1900.

<sup>133</sup> *Emil Weilshäuser: E. Weilshäuser’s illustriertes vegetarisches Kochbuch*<sup>4</sup>, Leipzig 1896, a digitalized version of the book is available online via this link: <https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/6544/1/1/>.

<sup>134</sup> Cp. *Treitel: Eating Nature*, pp. 65-69.

or bottles became feasible *because* of the nutritional revolution instead of having been invented through an act of defiance by a mere agricultural and food-focused countermovement as those of vegetarians and land reformers.<sup>135</sup>

Highly interesting, women since the 1860s wrote most cookbooks in Germany. Whereas in the time before 1900 female cook pioneers like Henriette Davidis or Hedwig Heyl marked bourgeois cookery which again was dominated by recipes and meal courses including high rates of meat, it was male authors like Baltzer or Weilhäuser who created and mainly molded the genre of vegetarian cookbooks.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, female authorship of vegetarian cookbooks as written by Anna Springer for example, is documented, too. In the 1880s, the medical doctor Anna Fischer-Dünckelmann even had advocated publicly for offering classes on vegetarian cooking and for installing vegetarian cooking schools. Although she was highly motivated to integrate vegetarianism and its nutritional aspects to the domestic economy and to the cooking of working class families through such schools and classes, no relevant venue with a wide-area charisma had been founded by this time.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, national and nationalist exhilarations in Germany immensely had marked the societal and cultural atmosphere since the founding of the Imperial state in 1871 and had not spared bourgeois or conventional culinary discourses and cookbooks. Many German cooks of the traditional culinary camp even felt bound together and particularly inclined to dissociate themselves from French cooks or culinary influences from France within German cuisine respectively.<sup>138</sup> At the same time no political impetuses of this kind are documented from the field of vegetarian cookbooks. On the one hand nutritional and medical food-related considerations of vegetarians and Life reformers increasingly were perceived within the scene of bourgeois or conventional cooks, restaurants and inns. On the other hand the ethical and economic arguments of vegetarianism, particularly those socioeconomic standpoints referred to land use, soil and animal livestock being underlined by the vegetarian intellectual spearheads and vegetarian cookbooks, were not taken into account by the traditional culinary milieu.<sup>139</sup> In the vegetarian milieu on the contrary it was people like Oskar J. Peterson for example who as well promoted plant based diets and recipes rather than animal food and meat in the kitchens.

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<sup>135</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 65-69.

<sup>136</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, pp. 71-72 and generally referring to women and bourgeois cookery e.g. cp. *Christa Spreizer*: Von der Hausfrau zum Hindenburg der Küche. Hedwig Heyl, rationale Ernährung und moderne bürgerliche Frauenidentität, in: *Norman Aselmeyer/ Veronika Settele (eds.): Geschichte des Nicht-Essens. Verzicht, Vermeidung und Verweigerung in der Moderne*, Berlin-Boston 2018, pp. 61-90.

<sup>137</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p 58.

<sup>138</sup> Cp. *Benedikt Krüger*: Gehobene und exquisite Küche in der Konsumgesellschaft. Dresden um 1900, Ostfildern 2015, pp. 65-67 .

<sup>139</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 188.

He underlined his very holistic, sociopolitical view by publications such as „Die Küche der Zukunft“<sup>140</sup> (The Cuisine of the Future). In his book, Peterson presents a certain so called reform cooker which was a small, non-expensive and self-contained steam apparatus, run by a petroleum lamp and allegedly being able to cook all “natural food” for the day at once in one hour. The book and the machine respectively aimed at a twofold goal. The intention was to relieve housewives from many hours of work when preparing food for their husbands or their family and enable them to prepare food in an economically much cheaper way. In conjunction with finding innovative ways to cope with the above addressed social question, this should enable women to have more leisure time in nature and enable working men to reduce hours in the factories. The resulting lower salaries could now be sufficient due to much lower costs for food and the household.<sup>141</sup>

Not only wanted Peterson to liberate housewives and their working men from the restrictions of the household and the economic challenges of expensive meat through his reform cooker and enable them to a kind of household „self-governance“, too. Beyond this, he opened a far bigger perspective by other further explanations on reform cookery. Admittedly, he argued for taking meat and dairy products only as small add-ons to a plant-centered diet. Without doubt he was one of the agents in the discourse for whom vegetarianism and eating naturally did not mean exactly the same.<sup>142</sup> But his point was not a would-be moral rejection of animal slaughter. Rather, it was a sober calculation thanks to certain statistics on the growth of the global population and the meat consumption worldwide. According to the latter calculations, it was a look on the limitation of arable land and soil which let him conclude that it would be impossible to provide all people on earth with animal protein.<sup>143</sup> Evidently, this case vividly demonstrates that the ecologic and environmentally-related considerations of vegetarianism, inherently touching the aspect of land and soil access too, had been ushered even to the food and cook reform book literature until this time. Respective thoughts hence had obviously stabilized far beyond Humboldt’s or Baltzer’s remarks from the Nordhausen setting in the discourse of the vegetarian and food reform-oriented scene.

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<sup>140</sup> *Oscar J. Peterson: Die Küche der Zukunft*, Lichtenthal b. Baden-Baden 1894, a digitalized version of the book is available online via this link: <https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/10193/1/>.

<sup>141</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp.18-19.

<sup>142</sup> Cp. foodnote 43.

<sup>143</sup> Cp., *Treitel: Eating Nature*, p. 73 and moreover generally on this aspect in Peterson’s work cp. *Oscar J. Peterson: Unsere Nahrungsmittel in ihrer volkswirtschaftlichen und gesundheitlichen Bedeutung: eine praktische Ernährungslehre für Gesunde und Kranke*, Stuttgart 1894, a digitalized version of the book is available online via this link: <http://digital.zbmed.de/gesundheitspflege/content/structure/6462103>.

## **IV. Vegetarianism, land reform and Life reformers on a new level of politicization**

### **IV.1. How to get the right food from farm to fork?**

Ideas and approaches of a self-determined and economically self-governed daily nutrition on a plant-based diet which increasingly integrated matters of land and soil in some cases started to get exaggerated and overdone to politically extreme versions in the very early 1890s. In Heinrich Lahmann's opinion, a German medical doctor and influential Life reform naturopath of the time, agriculture was the most natural occupation of the human being. He valued it even as the most essential one prior to all other human activities. For being what he in his writings calls a healthy and clean people's organism (gesunder Volksorganismus), allegedly round about 70 percent of the population must be involved in cultivating the soil and the ground. At the maximum 25 percent of the people in a nation state should be occupied by craftsmanship, trade, the maintenance of the infrastructure and by the arts. Any other situation which does not fulfill these rates is called a morbid, abnormal condition. Necessarily, it would lead to a so called social disease and decay.<sup>144</sup> He laments that public critique of the industrial development in the German urban areas with its factories and smoking chimneys is rarely accepted by the nation's elites whereas "[...]wir bei einer Reihe der größten Denker aller Nationen eine Sehnsucht danach finden, 'den Kohl sich selbst zu erbauen und mit seinem Schweiß zu betauen' [...]"<sup>145</sup> Lahmann takes this statement in favour of cultivating one's own cabbage and vegetables as clear evidence for both the need for more people to do small-scale subsistence agriculture and for its social cogency benefitting the (German) nation.

In his work the doctor and activist partly demonstrates a quite complex approach to some aspects of human agriculture and nutrition. On the structural basis of a global mindset he draws connections between micro- and macro-scales across national boundaries. He does so by indirectly comparing the locally high spatial and population density in the growing German industrial cities with an alleged lack of space in the overall Chinese Empire of those years. According to his estimation, the decrease of the rural population in Germany resulting from the migration of peasants to the industrial areas and from emigration to overseas is an expression of a negative trade and industry-based culture. The latter reportedly oppresses a so called healthy 'agri-culture' and at the same time causes population density in urban areas which again propels the decline of small-scale food production. Referring to the territory of China and its huge Empire Lahmann in contrast claims the transition from field cultivation to

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<sup>144</sup> Cp. *Lahmann*: Die diätische Blutentmischung, p.236.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, p. 236.

gardening. The lack of space and a much higher soil fertility or productivity respectively would automatically lead to gardening as the dominant source of food production in a society with a dense population. Corresponding to that, hundreds of millions of Chinese small-scale farmers and gardeners allegedly are doing subsistence agriculture and till the soil with their own hands and spades. Lahmann regards them as being isolated from the so called morbid Western culture and as only being confronted with minimal influences of industry or trade. Thus they would not know problems like the “social question” being at stake in Imperial Germany of those years and therefore must be much more satisfied than the people in Germany. He frames the Chinese peasantry and its sort of agriculture as making the Empire sovereign, strong and powerful whereas the European nation states and the United States of America from his standpoint are doomed to permanent weakness because of their industry sectors.<sup>146</sup> Heinrich Lahmann even further elaborated writings of Gustav Schlickeysen from the 1870s. The latter had argued that a fruit and grain based diet would lead to a higher evolution of peaceful farmers. Lahmann now drew more complex pictures. In his opinion, the de facto meaty diet of the majority of Germans at that time led to a kind of degeneration of the blood (“Blutentmischung” or “Blutentartung”). The Life reform activist reasoned the latter alleged effect with the import of crops from the United States of America which would water down the heartland of German farmers.<sup>147</sup> As he purported, those grains were often used for feeding livestock in addition to the German farmers’ own crop production as a source of fodder. Particularly in conjunction with raising cattle livestock for meat consumption he identifies this practice as highly inefficient and cost-intensive, too.

Beyond that he indirectly refers back to the perspectives of Eduard Baltzer and the other above vegetarian prophets by locating the origins of the alleged German agriculture’s problems in a deficient paradigm of food and nutrition. According to Lahmann, fruits and vegetables could be available more than sufficiently if only the Germans articulated a market demand. He claims that while the import of grains from the US will decline “[...]der industrielle Bettler, vom Hunger gezwungen, zum Spaten greift [und] wir [...]mittlerweile eingesehen [haben], daß [!] der Körnerbau kolossal unwirtschaftlich ist,[...]während beim Gartenbau, zu dem die relative Überbevölkerung (wie in China) geführt hat, demselben Stück Land anstatt der einmaligen Körnerernte[...], zunächst beispielsweise eine Radieschen- und Salaternte, dann eine Spinaternte und endlich eine Hülsenfrucht- oder Winterkohlernte abgerungen werden können, während ‚eine Etage höher‘ die Obstbäume ihre Früchte

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<sup>146</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

<sup>147</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating nature, p. 85.

spenden[...]. Während heute nicht einmal 50 Millionen Deutsche von den Erträgen ihres Landes leben können, wird in jener Zukunft eine Familie auf einem 3-4 Hektar großen Stück Erde ein vielleicht ärmliches, aber gesundes und fröhliches Dasein führen, und es wird für weitere Millionen Platz sein.“<sup>148</sup> Thus his ideal-typical preferred model was one according to which German peasants and settlers lived from their own fruits and plants in a pattern of subsistence agriculture on their own piece of land, in peaceful harmony with each other and being fully sovereign to feed themselves from within the German nation state or without being dependent on any imported food.<sup>149</sup>

It seems worth remarking and problematizing that Lahmann in his book among others interweaves phrases on the suggested disease of the so called social body with proto-fascist statements on a “Überproduktion an unbrauchbaren Menschen”<sup>150</sup> as allegedly caused by industrial urban development. In a nutshell, Heinrich Lahmann obviously co-created and further propelled a discourse which interconnected the encounter of the social question and its challenges, would-be medical statements on the blood quality of the Germans as caused by agriculture, presumed soil-friendly farming methods on the basis of available land, vegetarianism and matters of sovereign food production from within the German nation state. Nevertheless, Lahmann by no means only elaborated theory-based and would-be sociopolitical or economic paradigms of how to make possible a sovereign food supply for the nation with fruits and vegetables in special reference books. Among others, he contributed to vegetarian periodicals which had become popular since the 1880s in the vegetarian milieu.<sup>151</sup> For instance Lahmann tried to give helpful advice for implementing vegetarianism in practice as a daily habit by presenting the benefits of certain plant and mineral nutriments. These modern food products allegedly tasted like meat extract but provided healthy nutrients for workers. Those people were still too much accustomed to the taste of meat and in his view step by step had to be guided to eat the even more precious fruits and vegetables.<sup>152</sup> This small particular context exemplifies once more the paradoxies of the vegetarian milieu since Lahmann’s mineral nutriments would not have been conceivable without the industrial or nutritional revolution respectively.

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<sup>148</sup> Lahmann: Die diätische Blutentmischung, p.241.

<sup>149</sup> Cp. Treitel: Eating nature, p. 85.

<sup>150</sup> Lahmann: Die diätische Blutentmischung, p. 236.

<sup>151</sup> For an overview cp. Kai Buchholz: Lebensreformerisches Zeitschriftenwesen, in: *Ibd./Latocha/Peckmann/Wolbert (eds.): Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe*, pp. 45-51.

<sup>152</sup> Cp. Heinrich Lahmann: Praktischer Vegetarismus, in: *Vegetarische Rundschau. Monatsschrift für naturgemässe Lebensweise* V (1) 1885, pp. 300-301.

Another less radical, but equally influential vegetarian leader who contributed to the sociopolitical discourse on vegetarianism in Life reform circles in a relevant intellectual scope was Maximilian Klein. In his major work “Die harmonische Lebensweise (Vegetarismus). Die Grundbedingung zur Erlangung von Gesundheit, Wohlstand und moralisch-ästhetischer Erlösung“<sup>153</sup> (The harmonic lifestyle. Vegetarianism. The precondition for gaining health, prosperity and salvation regarding morals and aesthetics) he explicates in how far a purely vegetarian food consumption would benefit the nation and the state as such in several ways. Like in a kind of cyclic pattern comparable with the writings of the above vegetarian spearheads like Eduard Baltzers among others, Klein in his book covers a wide spectrum from individual human health, idealtypical citizenry, the labour market, land availability and access to (plant-based) food for theoretically many more million inhabitants of Germany. The latter as well as the former socioeconomic fields allegedly profit from a purely vegetarian food supply.<sup>154</sup> As a matter of fact he even speaks of a so called “vegetarianization” of humankind as being a particular social law. This law allegedly resulted from the challenges and necessities of land availability, collective health and of moral requirements. For Klein it implied that one day all humankind would have to eat vegetarian, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.<sup>155</sup>

Generally, Klein and many other Life reformers were open-minded for new scientific insights which promised to facilitate bypassing the so called animal problem when it came to the production of fertilizers for German agriculture. Klein had already started to introduce his theories to an interested public through lectures while travelling around the country. It was now mainly the systemic usage of green (plant-based) manures which nourished the soil by being ploughed back to the ground, crop rotation on fallow land as well as the deployment of new artificial fertilizers and human waste according to Chinese recycling systems which were in the focus of attention in those reform-circles. Klein himself again to a high degree was marked by two important theoretical strands, being represented by the well-known and above mentioned Justus Liebig and by the French agronomist Eugene Simon. It was Liebig who from a standpoint of chemistry had advocated for so called night soil, reportedly being invented by Chinese farmers and containing ashes, animal and human excrements as well as remains of slaughtered animals. This approach apparently allowed Chinese people to sell their produce on urban markets. At the same time the return back home to their rural farms made

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<sup>153</sup> *Maximilian Klein*: Die harmonische Lebensweise (Vegetarismus). Die Grundbedingung zur Erlangung von Gesundheit, Wohlstand und moralisch-ästhetischer Erlösung“, Leipzig 1886<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>154</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp.31-32.

<sup>155</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.



possible to carry huge amounts of human city waste which enabled a kind of micro-structural rotation farming. In this specific context, the principle of not using anything from killed animals seemed to have been become secondary and less important. Again Eugene Simon's reports on specific kinds of Chinese agriculture which based on using and recycling human waste as a fertilizer and produced food for millions of people in a mainly plant-based way had generated high attention in circles of Western agricultural modernizers from the late 1880s until the turn of the century.<sup>156</sup> The alleged methods of Chinese small-scale farmers who exercised their kind of agriculture intensely, who in the vast majority of cases consumed vegetarian food and recycled various kinds of waste in highly efficient ways were a much appreciated ideal-typical example according to which things should be done in Germany. This image as well provided the backdrop for vegetarian advocates and Life reformers to accuse the above mentioned owners of large estates as for instance in the East Elbian regions for exploiting the soil on the basis of mixed agriculture which included livestock and meat production. In the view of the former, the latter acted rather detrimentally concerning healthy and sufficient food supply in Germany instead of feeding the Germans in nutritious and environmentally sustainable ways.

Whereas some (earlier) vegetarian leaders and Life reformers like Baltzer and Klein paradoxically had been open-minded to the first upcoming artificial fertilizers (which implied to put substances like phosphorus or nitrogen among others in the soil), another emerging group of vegetarians and Life reformers not only recognized the advantages of artificial fertilizers regarding the avoidance of animal-based manure. Beyond that, they reasoned about the possible negative medical and economic effects of artificial fertilizers to a greater degree.<sup>157</sup> Julius Hensel for instance passionately promoted a new kind of fertilizer, the so called ground stone fertilizer (*Steinmehldünger*). He considered it as being much more uncritical healthwise and as economically more attractive for the benefit of the German nation. In distinct words Hensel stressed the political character of the contemporary debates on food and agriculture in vegetarian and Life reform circles from his personal standpoint: "How rich, how strong and how healthy will the Germans be when we make our mountains tributary to yield new soil from which new wholesome cereals may be formed. We need then no more send our savings to Russia, to Hungary, to America, but will make our way through

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<sup>156</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: *Eating Nature*, pp.154-155.

<sup>157</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp.155- 156.

life by our strong elbows and with German courage, and shall keep off our adversaries.”<sup>158</sup> In those years of the late 1880s and early 1890s, more than two decades after the initiation of the first food-related debates between Liebig, Virchow and Baltzer, it obviously was still the main political question in the subtext of debates on farming techniques and vegetarian consumption in the circles of leading vegetarians, authors and Life reformers how hunger in Germany could generally be vanquished. To narrow it down, “Feeding the soil to feed the people, indeed, was rapidly becoming a question of civilization”<sup>159</sup>.

Agents like Maximilian Klein first and foremost argued holistically by taking into account the distribution of soil, a vegetarian diet and the wellbeing of the German economy.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, the discourse on vegetarian food and land availability got nationalized in an increasingly radical way. Be it as it may, it without doubt was conspicuous that the interwoven, ambiguous discourse on vegetarian food consumption, soil fertility, small-scale agriculture techniques, the well-being of the economy and human health, on the one hand got nourished by global contents and trajectories. This got emphasized by the emphatic references to Chinese agricultural practices or thanks to the statements of the French agronomist Eugene Simon among others. As could be shown above, at the same time this discourse got increasingly reshaped from within the paradigm of the German state in a nationalist way. It got exactly enrooted in the same theoretical breeding ground- eating vegetarian and applying Chinese small scale farming techniques which focused on vegetables and fruits. But these considerations got functionalized and many vegetarian leaders and Life reformers in Germany endowed their discourse with a mounting nationalist impetus. Matters of agricultural soil fertility and availability, ideals of feeding a linearly growing German population often were framed in an undiluted nationalist way. Particularly the biopolitical understandings of human health and proto-fascist notes as demonstrated by Lahmann and his claims on the so called degeneration of the blood added an extreme, even völkisch character. Economically, this specific ideological evolvment became more distinct by the ambitions for a national food-related sovereignty or even autarky in clear dissociation of other Eastern and Western states like the US or Russia. By this time, some vegetarians had claimed in books and pamphlets, that in their opinion the so called truest and most righteous national wealth and the highest degree of national independence of all peoples is immanently encapsulated in their respective

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<sup>158</sup> *Julius Hensel: Bread from Stones. A New and Rational System of Land Fertilization and Physical Regeneration*, Philadelphia 1894, pp. 94-95, a digitalized version of the book is available online via this link: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015057136601&view=1up&seq=7>.

<sup>159</sup> *Treitel: Eating Nature*, p. 155.

<sup>160</sup> Cp. *Klein: Harmonische Lebensweise*, p. 34.

land and soil which they work on, till and cultivate. The more food they would harvest thanks to their national soil culture, the wealthier they would become.<sup>161</sup>

#### **IV.2. The further evolvement of activists, ideas and ideologies- a grassroots perspective on the spread of vegetarianism and land reform in Imperial Germany**

The intellectual strands of vegetarianism, land reform or small scale agriculture respectively were blended by Life reformers like Lahmann, Klein or Hensel for instance and got endowed with a marked nationalist impetus among others. At the same time the vegetarian clubs and the attached societal milieu further evolved according to the dynamics of regular societal life apart from theory-based explications. Thus it seems fruitful to have a close glance at the societal and institutional structure of the further developing vegetarian milieu now. Let us see if and to which extent it possibly embedded the above presented ideological mix of vegetarian food consumption, thoughts on land reform and an evolving nationalism or not.

The vegetarian associations and clubs in Nordhausen and Stuttgart in meantime had inspired many more people of the natural lifestyle and vegetarianism to institutionalize their interest. Even in 1884 there had been 11 local clubs, being under the umbrella of two supra-regional associations so far. The scope of club members and friends of vegetarianism in that year encompassed a total number of 2464 regarded from a standpoint which includes groups even beyond the German national boundaries.<sup>162</sup> The Deutsche Verein für harmonische Lebensweise, so to speak Berlin's club of vegetarians, was so convinced by the above Maximilian Klein's standpoints on (Chinese) small scale farming techniques, on vegetarianism and both his rhetoric and presence in public (as could be experienced by his lectures) that it hired him for so called propaganda journeys to places even beyond Germany. Klein among others held lectures on the universalistic goals of vegetarianism with the aim to disseminate its holistic sociopolitical approaches in Graz or Merano thanks to the financial support of the club in Berlin. Evidently, Klein and his back-up-structure in terms of the vegetarians from Berlin felt the same 'higher' sense of mission to spread vegetarianism and the abidance of 'natural laws' through food consumption as Eduard Baltzer, Gustav Struve and the "Lichtfreunde"- association had done before. Some local leaders in the various cities started to perceive the vegetarian ideas of the time as being much more complex than putatively bringing across a mere reform of food consumption and cuisine.<sup>163</sup> In a synchronic dynamic to the self-organization of vegetarians in Germany, clubs had evolved in some other

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<sup>161</sup> Cp. *Krabbe*: *Gesellschaftsreform*, p. 67.

<sup>162</sup> Cp. *Krabbe*: *Lebensreformbewegung*, p. 26.

<sup>163</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: *Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich*, pp.85-87.

Western countries too and were marked by personal connections with the German associations and vice versa. Anyhow, the two German clubs again incorporated to become the “Deutscher Vegetarier-Bund” (German League of Vegetarians) in 1892, having its main office in Leipzig and uniting around 330 vegetarians at the time of its founding.<sup>164</sup> This overarching German national association probably imbibed a relatively broad spectrum of different individual members and their respective thoughts on reform. One part of the spectrum’s individual branches and clubs which became a constituent pillar of the above “Deutscher Vegetarier Bund” was the “Deutsche Verein für naturgemäße Lebensweise”. It contributed a particularly heterogeneous group of members to the overarching German association.<sup>165</sup> As it is documented for instance for the year 1884, it consisted of 172 merchants and small shopkeepers, 164 craftsmen, 158 teachers, 83 civil servants of different ranks, 74 employees, 64 naturopaths, 64 authors, artists and journalists, 52 students and pupils, 48 retirees and pensioners, 48 technicians, 43 farmers, 33 factory owners, 26 lawyers, 25 clergymen, 24 army officers and 47 people of other professions. Up to 90 percent of the members allegedly had stated that they became vegetarians out of health reasons related to food consumption. Only an obvious minority to which again mostly women belonged (the total number of around 10 to 11 percent of the institutionalized vegetarian movement between 1875 and 1905 was represented by women) had mentioned ethical aspects like love of animals as the reason to become both vegetarian and a member of a respective association.<sup>166</sup>

As the sources indicate, it was mostly pupils, students and academics who indirectly stated that they had become member of a vegetarian association due to a certain idealist romanticizing of nature as such. The latter access again was often combined with other activities of expressing Life reform attitudes like hiking, advocating for the protection of nature and others.<sup>167</sup> Whereas the vegetarian clubs and institutionalized scene as such mostly remained non-denominational and neutral concerning religion and party politics, the idea of a so called Germanism and its global supremacy in terms of cultural policy became popular among some vegetarians. The latter group of vegetarians in most cases belonged to the educated middle-classes. Similar to the members of this social group in England and the United States of America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this attitude sometimes mounted in making an appeal of solidarity to the other so called Germanic nations versus the Slavic and Roman

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<sup>164</sup> Cp. *Krabbe*: *Lebensreformbewegung*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>165</sup> For a helpful and thorough overview of the institutional evolvement and structure of the vegetarian clubs cp. *Baumgartner*: *Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich*, pp. 81-85.

<sup>166</sup> Cp. *Teuteberg*: *Sozialgeschichte des Vegetarismus*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>167</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

peoples. Nevertheless, it was unquestioned among vegetarians that the future of a people and a nation would only be dependent on a certain kind of social harmony between the different societal groups in the sense of Eduard Baltzer's pacifist attitude. Therefore, this state of society could never be reached by a belligerent display of power.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, the inherent connection between raising livestock, the need to grow animal fodder and the use or even exploitation of land and soil as being promoted by the "prophets" like Eduard Baltzer or Oscar J. Peterson had not entered directly into daily life's vegetarian discourses beyond the latter's writings. Moreover, we evidently have to proceed on the assumption that the perspectives and statements of Lahmann, Klein and Hensel who coalesced vegetarianism, land reform, agrarian soil cultivation and claims on national food sovereignty so fervently, had not yet got down to the average vegetarian club member- despite the lecture tours on Chinese small scale farming techniques and vegetarianism as conducted by Maximilian Klein.

Hence these aspects at least must have played a very inferior role in the decision- making why to become a vegetarian club member at that time. Political standpoints on the future of agriculture and food supply in Germany against the backdrop of vegetarianism apparently were no serious motivational driving force to become engaged in the clubs. The scholar Eva Barlösius, who eminently dedicated much work to the sociological background of vegetarians under the umbrella of Life reform, provides fruitful overview of the regular average members of vegetarian clubs and their societal context as regarded through a historical lens. Thanks to her above precise analysis of many vegetarians' professional life's journey and specific German address books in particular which are available for the overall time period between 1868 and 1898, it is much easier to differentiate various types of vegetarians. Whereas Barlösius draws the above plausible characterization of the intellectual spearheads like Baltzer and Struve as "prophets", the average vegetarian club members are framed as "followers" of the former.<sup>169</sup> Consequently, it was worth having a societal insight into the latter's origins and characteristics of daily life, too. The preceding depiction of the vegetarians' professional backdrop who belonged to the "Verein für naturgemäße Lebensweise" in 1884 on the one hand shows a relatively broad spectrum of different professions and pursuits in ordinary weekday life. On the other hand- being elaborated by Barlösius- the vegetarian club members were anything but not representing workers, peasants or any societal groups which according to Baltzer or Virchow were so much affected by the "social question" and its (food-related) consequences straight away. Rather, it was lower middle classes and new urban middle

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<sup>168</sup> Cp. *Krabbe*: *Gesellschaftsveränderung*, p. 157.

<sup>169</sup> Cp. *Barlösius*: *Naturgemäße Lebensführung*, p. 98.

classes being given birth to by the massive social transformations in Germany since the late 1860s who represented the majority of the vegetarian milieu. Although the vast majority of average vegetarian club members was not reached and driven by leading Life reformers' public intellectual contributions on vegetarianism, on the benefits of small-scale rotation farming for soil fertility and on land reform, the "Deutscher Vegetarier-Bund" emerged as an institutional lobby framework for the various purposes of Life reform. It recommended its members to join many other associations which followed the ideological paths of the Life reform movement beyond food. For instance these were the ones for animal protection, for fashion reform or such clubs promoting abstinence from smoking and alcohol consumption—roughly following the "philosophy" of Eduard Baltzer and other vegetarians and food reformers respectively.<sup>170</sup> But first and foremost, the members were recommended to enter the associations of the land reform movement. There, the vegetarian cause should be propagated and propelled<sup>171</sup> although people probably were not properly informed about the advantages of Chinese farming techniques as being promoted by Lahmann and Klein. Notwithstanding, even the club members at the basis of the vegetarian movement in any event got some structural access to the causes of land reform whereas agricultural considerations as those depicted above were not the primary reasons for their activism.

Accordingly, relevant scholarship discerns and confirms a specific structural inclusion of the vegetarian movement and vegetarianism as such into the Life reform movement during the 1890s<sup>172</sup> while and despite the vegetarian idea already had been an inherent part of ideas about food production and consumption should be reformed as depicted above as well. As being expressed by vegetarian and reform cookbooks, this lifestyle presumably needed to be embedded and experienced in daily socio-cultural life even beyond the mere membership in one of the local vegetarian clubs. Although Life reform in essence was understood as "self-reform" and demanded a holistic change of daily customs towards a more "natural lifestyle" by being vegetarian, celebrating nudism while taking "bathes" of sun and air within nature etc., it was the obvious minority of Life reformers who really conducted an alternative lifestyle. As can be recognized by the above statistical example of their professional backgrounds, the very most of them belonged to and stuck to middle-classes or in some cases to the petty bourgeoisie. Among others, it became clear that they by far did not abandon all of their "conventional" civic lifestyle. Probably most of them belonged to the group of idea-

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<sup>170</sup> Cp. *Fritzen*: *Gesünder leben*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>171</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>172</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 38.

based followers of the prophets like Baltzer or Struve in the above indicated sense, independent of being a formal vegetarian club member or not. The “followers” did not primarily regard the cause of a natural lifestyle as a political tool to deeply change society or even the governance structures of the state. Only a small and particular group of Life reformers took the ideals and goals of the movement to live being embedded “in nature” so seriously and fundamentally, that they became so called outsiders.<sup>173</sup> Suffice it to say, the mainly urban adherents of the vegetarian milieu, which again primarily had grown in the cities due to the high degree of exposedness to the phenomena of industrialization compared to rural sites, of course demanded for the concrete access to vegetarian food and the respective eating culture for being able to apply the respective lifestyle in a graspable way.

“ ‘Die Welt will Thaten sehen. Und erst von da an werden wir einen kräftigeren Aufschwung zu nehmen hoffen dürfen, wo wir der Welt durch greifbare Einrichtungen den Beweis von der Möglichkeit und Zuträglichkeit unseres neuen Lebens liefern. Solche Einrichtungen sind vor allem vegetarische Speisehäuser in den Städten und vegetarische Kolonien auf dem Lande‘ “.<sup>174</sup> When this appeal on the need of vegetarian restaurants and colonies for further enrooting this lifestyle was yielded during the summit of the „Deutscher Verein für naturgenäße Lebensweise“ in 1888, the first restaurants already sprouted in Germany. But no vegetarian colony had been set up in Germany so far. Instead, the above depicted speculation on land and soil or the high prices of land respectively had triggered another effect. Groups of vegetarian settlers, in some cases surely driven by colonial fantasies and writings as those of Theodor Hertzka, emigrated to the American continent with the aim to found colonies thanks to cheap available land.<sup>175</sup> Already since the mid-1880s, the first short period of German colonialism was induced during the rule of Reichskanzler Otto von Bismarck. Many Germans thus felt attracted to escape the economic crisis during these so called Gründerkrachjahre when the boom during the aftermath of the founding of the nation state in 1871 had come to a temporary end. In the wake of the emigration to “new” German territories abroad, several groups of vegetarians, to which a few of the most fervent vegetarian activists of Berlin belonged, embarked to Belize, Chile and California in the United States of America. There, they founded some of the first German vegetarian colonies as such.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Cp. *Christoph Conti*: Abschied vom Bürgertum. Alternative Bewegungen in Deutschland von 1890 bis heute, Hamburg 1984, p. 66.

<sup>174</sup> Cited in *Ulrich Linse*: Von „Nueva Germania“ nach „Eden“, in: *Bauwelt* 83 (1992), p. 2453.

<sup>175</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 2453.

<sup>176</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 2453 and cp. *Stefan Manz*: Constructing a German Diaspora. The Greater German Empire, 1871-1914, New York 2014, pp. 26-30.

It was Bernhard Förster, a former teacher at a Gymnasium in Germany and husband of Elisabeth Nietzsche, the sister of the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who in 1886 founded the most prominent German vegetarian colony abroad in Paraguay. It was called “Nueva Germania” and encompassed a so called colonial area of 222 square kilometres. Being bought from the Paraguayan government, it should be accessible for vegetarian and non-vegetarian German settlers.<sup>177</sup> The colony’s emergence can be explained by two strands which are both important for grasping the breeding ground on which some German vegetarian colonies were founded in this time. On the one hand Förster was convinced that prices for land and soil were far too high in Germany. In his estimation a vegetarian community would neither have been able to raise the purchase money for the land as such nor would it have been able to reach a certain sustainable economic stability.<sup>178</sup> On the other hand Förster was fervently driven by severe forms of anti-Semitism.<sup>179</sup> The new colony should be free of Jews, be the basis for a so called future Germany in the Paraguayan wilderness and should be elaborated with the help of vegetarian settlers. Originally, it even was his unscrupulous anti-Semitic agitation as well which provoked the dismissal from school teaching in Germany.<sup>180</sup>

A few years before, in 1882, Bernhard Förster for instance had been involved in conducting the first so called “Antisemiten-Kongress”<sup>181</sup> in Dresden together with radical anti-Semites like Ernst Schmeitzner, Ernst Henrici, Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg and others. The manifest of this congress even counts as a typical example of the interspersed anti-Semitism in Germany with racial ideology. The manifest again successively enforced the understanding of racial categories and the term race as such to encompass all anthropological, historical, social and political thinking of the era. At the same time “race” became an indispensable paradigm for contemporaneous anti-Semites to deal with the so called Jewish question (“Judenfrage”).<sup>182</sup> One of Förster’s fellows on the political activism against Jews and publisher of various periodicals on this matter, the above mentioned Ernst Schmeitzner, later

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<sup>177</sup> Cp. *Linse*: Nueva Germania, pp. 2453-2454.

<sup>178</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 2453-2454.

<sup>179</sup> On Förster’s intellectual role in the evolution of völkisch nationalism in Germany cp. *Stefan Breuer*: Die Völkischen in Deutschland, Darmstadt 2008<sup>2</sup>, pp. 36-46.

<sup>180</sup> Cp. *Linse*: Nueva Germania, p. 2453.

<sup>181</sup> For a general overview of anti-Semitism in this era e.g. cp. *Andrea Henneke-Weischer*: Die deutsch-jüdische Kulturgemeinschaft, in: *Sabine Haupt/ Stefan Bodo Würffel (eds.)*: Handbuch Fin de Siècle, Stuttgart 2008, p. 266.

<sup>182</sup> Cp. *Justus H. Ulbricht*: Das völkische Verlagswesen im deutschen Kaiserreich, in: *Puschner/ Schmitz/ Ulbricht (eds.)*: Handbuch, p. 288 and cp. *Hildegard Chatellier*: Wagnerismus in der Kaiserzeit, in: *Puschner/ Schmitz/ Ulbricht (eds.)*: Handbuch, p.598.



became owner of a shop for natural food and Life reform products as those of Julius Hensel's "German" ground stone fertilizer among others. In a letter Schmeitzner condensed:

“ ‘ Vegetarismus, Kuhne neue Heilwissenschaft nebst Gesichtsausdruckskunde, Gobineau sur l'inégalité des races, die Degeneration der Rassen, der vollkommen schöne Mensch in der Bildhauerkunst, Nietzsches Herrenmoral, das sehe ich Alles [!] in einem Punkte zusammenfliessen[!]‘ “. <sup>183</sup> At least this quote to a certain degree indicates the more or less arbitrary ideological interweaving of vegetarianism and the preference for natural food products, (anti-Semitic) racism, naturopathy, certain art movements of the time and parts of Nietzsche's philosophical master morality in one ambiguous complex. Bernhard Förster again belonged to the so called "Bayreuther Kreis"<sup>184</sup> (Bayreuth Circle) of the already temporarily famous composer Richard Wagner (who died in 1883), both being a vegetarian and an anti-Semite. Förster got various inspirations for his colonial plans in Paraguay from the Bayreuther Kreis. Among others, he was convinced that only vegetarians could finally apprehend Wagner's opera Parsifal since vegetarianism played a prominent role in this magnum opus. Far beyond Förster and Wagner in person, the Bayreuth Wagnerian milieu and similar circles spawned a branch of völkisch<sup>185</sup> Life reformers from the late 1880s onwards. Ideologically, they became so misguided that in their view both Jews and meat eating represented alien elements and habits which endangered the unadulterated quality of German blood.<sup>186</sup> In their despicable view- although speaking about human beings and ways of behavior- both had to be exterminated from the social body. <sup>187</sup> Against this distinct and politically extreme backdrop it is even more surprising that Bernhard Förster did not refer to his marked anti-Semitism and did not agitate at all for this cause when he promoted his colony as a destination for German vegetarian settlers under the title "Die Kolonie 'Neu-Germania' in Paraguay als Wanderziel für Vegetarier" in an edition of the German periodical "Vegetarische Rundschau. Monatschrift für naturgemäße Lebensweise" in 1887.<sup>188</sup> In his contribution, Förster rather promotes the welcoming agricultural conditions like the high soil fertility which would spawn between one and two harvests per annum without any additional

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<sup>183</sup> *Ulbricht*: Völkisches Verlagswesen, p. 288.

<sup>184</sup> For a good overview of the Bayreuther Kreis cp. *Chatellier*: Wagnerismus, pp. 591-605.

<sup>185</sup> Concerning the genesis of völkisch ideology as such and its nexus with anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany cp. *Günter Hartung*: Völkische Ideologie, in: *Puschner/Schmitz/Ulbricht (eds.)*: Handbuch, pp. 29-30.

<sup>186</sup> For a general but thorough insight into völkisch anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany e.g. cp. *Werner Bergmann*: Völkischer Antisemitismus im Kaiserreich, in: *Puschner/Schmitz/Ulbricht (eds.)*: Handbuch, pp. 449-463.

<sup>187</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, p.87.

<sup>188</sup> Cp. *Bernhard Förster*: Die Kolonie „Neu-Germania“ in Paraguay als Wanderziel für Vegetarier, in: *Vegetarische Rundschau VII 1887*, p.171.

fertilization for years, the wide meadows for livestock as work animals and milk suppliers, the good conditions to grow fruits, vegetables, sugarcane, tea and coffee as well as relatively convenient infrastructural connections. Primarily, families and craftsmen of different branches like carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, plumbers, saddlers, blacksmiths, tailors and the like were addressed to emigrate there. Allegedly, each family would receive a little estate of 38 hectares. On an area which was called “legua” (18.5 square kilometers according to Förster) 40 families would be able to settle and to live from their land and have extra economic incomes from the sale of the food products. Moreover, Förster emphasizes in the periodical to what a high extent the climate in the past allegedly improved the health of foreign settlers and that nature or wilderness respectively, including insects, animals and plants, are much easier to tame and control than publicly purported.<sup>189</sup>

As regarded through an immediate political lens it seems extraordinarily conspicuous that Bernhard Förster, while acting intellectually from within Germany, was both so much influenced and driven by extreme anti-Semitism and völkisch vegetarian Life reformers. Consequently, he intended to found a so called future Germany abroad on the basis of a social life without Jews and a high rate of vegetarians in shape of the colony in Paraguay. The promotion of the latter in the *Vegetarische Rundschau* on the other hand does not directly indicate this völkisch ideology and anti-Semitism at all. Instead he elaborates alleged amenities concerning agricultural practice for German vegetarian settlers. The latter were so much affected by limited land resources or high prices respectively and in Förster’s estimation could not establish a lifestyle based on vegetarianism and land reform by their own efforts in Germany. At the same time, none of the above health-related, sociopolitical and environmental arguments of vegetarians and Life reformers seem to have motivated Bernhard Förster. As we can conclude, it was neither nutrition and health, nor liberal political virtues as those of national self-determination and the solution of social problems “through” the lens of vegetarian food having played a role for him. Just as little, it was not a thorough engagement in a possible common ground of small-scale farming techniques and vegetarian food production as promoted by the Life reformers Lahmann or Klein being relevant to Förster. Apart from Förster’s specified critique of high prices for arable land in Germany hence it must have been simply colonial fantasies, mere anti-Semitism and a vague, undefinable influence of vegetarians from the Bayreuther Kreis which directed him to lobby for vegetarian settlement activities in Paraguay. Förster, who promoted his cause as well in the newspapers

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<sup>189</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 173-176.

Deutsche Kolonialzeitung and Deutsche Welpost, without doubt was marked by a certain element of the zeitgeist and specifically bourgeois male ideas being interwoven in all colonial societies before 1914. In accordance with these images, pristine wilderness and nature, here the South American primeval forest, should be captured and developed by certain cultural achievements or even defeated in a kind of agricultural struggle by (German) peasants.<sup>190</sup> While German literature on South America of the era was permeated by glorifications of its flora and fauna, South America evolved as a projection surface for the new creation of the nation in the Wilhelmine state. In this sense, the German overseas communities were regarded as economically nourishing and extending the homeland respectively thanks to unrestricted markets for raw materials and products as well as by so called new Lebensraum.<sup>191</sup> Again, the image of the latter was perceived and reproduced as a space to revivify and strengthen the nation from within.<sup>192</sup> To a certain degree being compatible with Förster's and his circles' völkisch, racist and anti-Semitic mindset, some travel reports from South America left no doubt regarding the particular ideological entanglements between settler colonies and territorial Germany. By way of example some writings from a German settler region in Brazil, being intended for a broad public, underlined that "The[!] return to Teutonic nature and the 'rejuvenation of the race' were more than projects for the Brazilian subtropics. 'Our old homeland, too, can learn from these German [deutsch-völkische] colonies overseas'."<sup>193</sup>

As we have seen it was not only the above depicted critique of industrialization, of the accelerated social life in public perception and the anti-urbanism of many people which among others evoked and further fostered the evolvement of vegetarianism, its inherent food reform approaches and the need for new models of land distribution. These specific strands of the Life reform movement in the time of the Imperial era in Germany moreover epitomized a certain yearning for a rural life in the countryside. This went hand in hand with a longing or aspiration of the people to 're-connect' with land and soil as such- the latter and the former terms at the same time being charged with a sociocultural, a political and an agricultural

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<sup>190</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 172 and cp. *Sebastian Conrad: Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, Cambridge-New York- Melbourne-Madrid, Cape Town-Singapore, São Paulo- Delhi- Dubai-Tokyo-Mexico City 2010, pp. 294-295.

<sup>191</sup> According to Sebastian Conrad the term itself emerged only in 1901 by the geographer Friedrich Ratzel. Inherent to it was the image that the state territory needed to be extended by its people or it otherwise would experience rapid decay. Intellectually, this argument had been brought to the fore in the context of colonialism from the 1870s onwards. As opposed to the term Weltpolitik, again Lebensraum mirrored negative concerns about modernization and its assumed disadvantages for the people, for so called Germanness, for agriculture etc., cp. *ibid.*, p.280.

<sup>192</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 291 and cp. *ibid.*, pp. 295-296.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

sense.<sup>194</sup> Therefore the founding of rural communities and agricultural settler colonies, functioning as a shelter for a kind of alternative life as distinguished from the average living conditions in the urban spaces, emanated from this societal atmosphere.<sup>195</sup> The contemporary authors of the above indirectly quoted claims on the German race and its alleged fountain of youth in shape of the overseas colonies in South America obviously assumed that the German society of the territorial state ‘at home’ could learn from these particular settlements in a pattern of diffusion. At the same time the above image and concept of Lebensraum emerged as an overarching paradigm between the Kaiserreich itself and many colonial settlement projects.<sup>196</sup> It probably got socially constructed by being transferred back and forth through functionalities of entanglement. The articles in the *Vegetarische Rundschau* or the travel reports might count as clear evidence of this effect. ‘Lebensraum’ among others became one common background for Life reform activists, particularly for those who articulated their back-to-nature-reflexes in the context of the movement’s core pillars of (vegetarian) food and land reform. At the same time ‘Lebensraum’ became the frame of reference for more or less radical promoters of colonial settlement projects like Bernhard Förster or the above Theodor Hertzka who wanted to establish the land reform settlement project in Kenya for instance, the former being anti-Jewish, the latter being pro-Jewish.

It seems almost needless to say that agents of both sociopolitical branches and currents prompted the (further) founding of rural communities “where one could lead a life that was close to nature, far away from the civilization of the metropolis or the alienation of industrial society.[...][and]where the idyll of rural life and the idealization of a romantically viewed Volkstum were all elements of this concept, seen as a counter-concept to modern industrial society.”<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless, different attitudes and opinions concerning the matter of private land ownership existed between most of the German colonial settlers in South America and the land reformers being active within the Life reform movement in Germany. While the former were surrounded by vast stretches of land and mostly maintained conservative standpoints of private ownership, the latter struggled with urbanization, industrialization and population density in the cities. Thus, as being depicted above, they were convinced that only cooperative-based social projects which preferred ownership by a whole community would be the right solution. As we have seen through the controversies within the original land reform

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<sup>194</sup> Cp. *Bergmann*: *Agrarromantik*, p.88.

<sup>195</sup> Cp. *Ulrich Linse*: „Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde“. *Landkommunen in Deutschland 1890-1933*, München 1983, p. 7.

<sup>196</sup> Cp. *Conrad*: *Globalisation*, pp. 325-327.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibd.*, p.326.

circles of Hertzka (who still promoted his colonial ideas in 1893 in the Freilandverein of Berlin) and Oppenheimer and Damaschke (who both spoke ardently against overseas projects), most of the relevant German Life and land reformers respectively refused the approach of establishing German colonies and land reform projects abroad. They merely preferred to found rural communities or colonies at home within Germany's territorial borders.<sup>198</sup>

At the beginning of the 1890s, vegetarian ideas had already been very much discussed in politicized forms. At the same time the disputes between German land reformers and colonial fantasists on rural communities had gained pace. People like Bernhard Förster had tried to implement vegetarianism into his plans for a so called future Germany in Paraguay to a certain degree. Generally, völkisch ideas which referred to social Darwinist understandings of enforcing power against the backdrop of so called racial purity and anti-Semitism had established in some parts of the Life reform movement until the 1890s.<sup>199</sup> In 1891, when this overall quite heterogeneous sociopolitical umbrella had evolved, two German farmers started the first noteworthy attempt to coalesce vegetarianism, agriculture and community building within Germany. Emil Gött and Emil Strauß, both being farmers and novelists who belonged to the above reform-circle of Berlin-Friedrichshagen, conducted a first small experiment on setting up a vegetarian rural community over a stretch of four months. The project was far away from any tendencies of conventional colonial thought, from "nationalizing" the terms of land and soil or from anti-Semitism. Later in retrospect the two protagonists explicated that it was their primary goal to realize an approach of social and economic reform which was not focused on profit but on a perceptible holistic thrift for the community and on using the available land and soil only within its natural limits. There, people should be free of food hedonism, an aspect which Eduard Baltzer already had stressed and complained about so fervently by depicting meat, alcohol, sugar and coffee as being "unnatural". Furthermore, their project should eliminate the alleged overall fear of life which so many people like the family of Adolf Damaschke, who had struggled intensely with the downsides of industrialization and urbanization, had suffered from. In this context and referred to present-day debates the scholar Thomas Rohkrämer carves out that Life reformers in the Wilhelmine society were the first ones promoting a counter-concept for life in Germany which demanded respect for organically grown, non-industrialized spaces of social life, a kind of sustainable resource management related to nature and environment as well as a life design which made

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<sup>198</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 326 and cp. *Linse*: Nueva Germania, p. 2454.

<sup>199</sup> Cp. *Krabbe*: Gesellschaftsveränderung, p. 157.

possible to unfold “natural” human wants and needs.<sup>200</sup> Although the initiative of Gött and Strauß probably got noticed attentively in the reform-minded circles of Berlin, it in the first place was not granted to be established successfully.<sup>201</sup> Irrespective of these first initiatives and attempts to set up a vegetarian colony or rural community from within and in Germany, the first reverberating impulse to found such a long-term settlement in Germany came from South America. It was Bruno Wilhelmi, a tradesman from Berlin who had spent some years for work in Brazil in the late 1880s and got emphatically inspired by German Life reform colonies there. After coming back to Germany in 1889, he started some relevant activities in Berlin.<sup>202</sup>

In parallel to these initial ambitions to set up vegetarian communities in Germany during the late 1880s and early 1890s, the first so called reform houses or health shops began to offer the above meatless and plant- based food products like juices or cereals, sauces and spreads. These food products were spawned by the industrialization of food as such and the so called nutritional revolution. The stores now as well offered vegetarian cookbooks or even kitchenware on a regular basis. Although no precise definition of reform- food or -house respectively yet existed, the first “real”, distinct reform house is said to have opened in Berlin in 1887.<sup>203</sup> Secondly, even vegetarian restaurants budded in the bigger cities. It was mainly in Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and München, where a certain milieu of potential guests had established. For example in Berlin there were 17 vegetarian restaurants in 1892. Usually, these restaurants functioned as gathering places for members of vegetarian clubs and offered much space for the development of new networks. People could eat, getting informed about new literature or reform house products as well as listen to lectures on agriculture and reform food or the like in these restaurants and inns.<sup>204</sup> Generally, these restaurants as well as the above periodicals and journals must not be underestimated concerning the dissemination of concrete vegetarian consumption habits and natural eating practices in the 1880s and 1890s. Vegetarian restaurants also became organizers of cooking classes and, as it is documented by one particular entertaining example, some patrons of vegetarian restaurants apparently

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<sup>200</sup> Cp. *Thomas Rohkrämer: Lebensreform als Reaktion auf den technisch-zivilisatorischen Prozess*, in: *Buchholz/ Latocha/ Peckmann/ Wolbert (eds.): Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe*, p. 73 and for further reading on aspects of contemporary ecological sustainability within the Life reform movement e.g. cp. *Jost Hermand: Ökologische Aspekte der Lebensreformbewegung*, in: *Buchholz/ Latocha/ Peckmann/ Wolbert (eds.): Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe*, pp. 411-415.

<sup>201</sup> Cp. *Linse: Nueva Germania*, p. 2454.

<sup>202</sup> Cp. *Joachim Radkau: Die Verheißungen der Morgenfrühe. Die Lebensreform in der neuen Moderne*, in: *Buchholz/ Latocha/ Peckmann/ Wolbert (eds.): Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe*, p. 59 and cp. *Baumgartner: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel*, p. 127.

<sup>203</sup> Cp. *Fritzen: Gesünder leben*, p.44.

<sup>204</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p.48 and cp. *Wedemeyer-Kolwe: Aufbruch*, pp. 66-67 and cp. *Krabbe: Gesellschaftsreform*, p.117.

inclined to understand themselves as having to educate their guests. Carlotto Schulz, the chef and owner of a lunch place next to the Sophienkirche in Berlin offered a vegetarian lunch meal of three courses for a keen price. He used this setting to promote the nutritional advantages of “slow food” (consumption) or “slow chewing” in front of his guests on a permanent basis. According to him, this special food and eating culture was applicable to vegetables, fruits and plants in the same way as to meat (before). His activism even let him start to publish on this matter.<sup>205</sup> Particularly in the latter context it seems remarkable that vegetarianism and the natural lifestyle from the perspective of its adherents by no means excluded culinary pleasures. Apparently, despite vegetarianism’s focus on a kind of reductionist, purified and mainly plant-based consumption style it did not exclude the respective food culture at all. Some historians even proved by reference to vegetarian literature sources that abstinence and the enjoyments of food were not contradictory at all for many vegetarians and even led to a certain kind of hedonistic consumption. It was only Eduard Baltzer a few decades before who gave a negative connotation to food hedonism in a completely different sense when he depicted the consumption of meat, alcohol and coffee as hedonistic. In the sense of Carlotto Schulz for instance and against the backdrop of vegetarianism’s general promise of a healthy life, many contemporaries regarded the vegetarian and natural food consumption as a tool for a long-lasting, sustainable enjoyment of life as such.<sup>206</sup>

## **V. Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden in Oranienburg**

### **V.1. Eden – a prime example of vegetarianism and land reform as driving forces behind sociopolitical change in Germany?**

It was in 1892, one year after Emil Gött and Emil Strauß had ignited the dynamic on founding vegetarian colonies in Germany with their small trial balloon in Berlin, when the above tradesman Bruno Wilhelmi proactively appeared in the scene. He published a call in the periodical *Vegetarische Rundschau* in which he asked for help of other vegetarians to found a vegetarian colony or rural community respectively. It was his general goal to set it up somewhere close to Berlin and put its focus on orcharding and fruit production.<sup>207</sup> A few months later, in spring 1893, but before the day any proper colony was founded, Bruno Wilhelmi, who already had been the treasurer of the local vegetarian in Berlin club for some time, in a way marked the whole initiation process of vegetarian colonies in Germany with a

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<sup>205</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p. 59 and cp. *Treitl*: Eating Nature, pp. 62-63.

<sup>206</sup> Cp. *Krüger*: Gehobene und exquisite Küche, p. 174.

<sup>207</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p.126.

certain extra political impetus. Being generally inspired by his impressions from South America, Wilhelmi lobbied passionately for his plan to found a colony close to Berlin and for attracting potential settlers on the first federal convention of the above mentioned “Deutscher Vegetarier- Bund”. It took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1893 in Hannover.<sup>208</sup> As Judith Baumgartner argues, Wilhelmi’s specific preparations and activities concerning the actual installation of such a rural community necessarily have to be regarded in conjunction with the Life reform activist Benno Buerdorff’s engaged plea to found so called vegetarian villages in the edition of *Vegetarische Rundschau* of 1893. Apparently, the idea was to organize these villages in a loose network in the medium term and to enroot them on a local membership basis. Buerdorff, who accompanied these processes from his activity center in Leipzig, had first identified and then promoted Bruno Wilhelmi as the potential head of a future vegetarian “village” or colony-like rural community respectively in the vicinity of Berlin.<sup>209</sup> Of course these suggestions and impetuses were received and debated alertly in the spheres of vegetarians and land reformers of Berlin like in the Friedrichshagen-circle or the local vegetarian club. Many members crossed ways and gathered in the above restaurants and venues which in general increasingly offered more breeding ground for the further sociopolitical evolvement of the scene of vegetarians, adherents of natural food consumption and promoters of land reform.

It was in the vegetarian restaurant “Ceres” in Berlin-Moabit that a group of people founded the reform colony “Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden e.G.m.b.H.” on May 28th 1893.<sup>210</sup> The names of 18 founding members are documented in the reports of the moment when “Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden” was formally set up. However, the majority of scholarly studies on Eden and its founding process work with the personal life careers and sociopolitical backgrounds of these persons only very rudimentarily and unsystematically. Rather, they clearly focus on the person and activity of Bruno Wilhelmi when Eden was launched. The latter without doubt was the most active agent in the emergence period of Eden and is its best known founding member respectively. Against this backdrop it seemed well justified to follow Judith Baumgartner’s scholarly approach to mainly concentrate on Bruno Wilhelmi when investigating the political character of Eden’s launch and the very first period of existence through the lens of personal actors.<sup>211</sup> Anyhow, the group of founding members indirectly confirms Eva Barlösius’ above mentioned sociological analysis of the vegetarian

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<sup>208</sup> Cp. *ibd.*, p.126.

<sup>209</sup> Cp. *ibd.*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>210</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner: Obstbaukolonie Eden*, p.511.

<sup>211</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel*, p. 127.



club members' and activists' social background. The official founders of Eden, all being male, were teachers, lawyers, medical doctors, shop owners, authors and artists among others.<sup>212</sup> Thus the red thread of middle- class dominance was extended another time in the new vegetarian colony at the time of its origin. On the one hand this access to the sociological character of Eden's core founding members might appear as being quite sober as it could bring across the impression of a socially more or less well established small crowd of people. On the other hand scholarly literature on Eden's inception invariably refers to the voice of the land reform theorist Franz Oppenheimer himself who stated: " 'Es waren lauter sozusagen pflastermüde Städter , eine ganze Anzahl von Sonderlingen und Sektierern aller Art dazwischen; sie wollten ihre Existenz auf den Obstbau stellen, von dem kaum einer die geringste Ahnung hatte' ".<sup>213</sup> This obviously quite sharp-tongued and pejorative perception, depicting the first Eden- members as utopian dreamers who lacked any skills on orcharding and agriculture, often gets emphasized by contemporary portrayals. According to those, the mostly academically educated founding members of Eden who in many cases stemmed from the spheres of creative artists and urban vegetarians were rather discussing social problems and the interlinks to food and agriculture in theory than being able to work properly in practice at all. Furthermore, they were often scouted as of allegedly tempting other less fortunate settlers or colonists to become their followers.<sup>214</sup>

In any case scholarly work indicates that Wilhelmi and the other founding members of Eden were concretely motivated to take action in Germany by the founding of the vegetarian colony "Obstbaugenossenschaft Heimgarten" in Bülach close to Zürich in Switzerland. It was formed in spring 1893, just a few days before- so to speak in between the federal convention of the Deutscher Vegetarierbund in Hannover and the crucial meeting in the restaurant "Ceres" in Berlin. Heimgarten's core philosophy was based on the assumption that the social questions of the time can only be solved in the countryside by a new structure of communal life and agriculture. Vegetarian food consumption was essential and land reform theories should directly be applied. Thus it became a welcome point of reference for Eden and the latter's constitution, structure and organization during the immediate formation phase in a way mirrored the character of the Heimgarten-colony. Wilhelmi planned to finance the respective setup of Eden by trading and selling the ground stone fertilizer of the above nationalist Life

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<sup>212</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>213</sup> Cited in *Conti: Abschied vom Bürgertum*, p. 76 but e.g. as well cp. *Linse: „Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde“*, p. 29.

<sup>214</sup> Cp. *Michael Winteroll: Das Paradies im Sande*, in: *Bauwelt* 83 (1992), p. 2456.

reformer Julius Hensel.<sup>215</sup> First and foremost, it was the founding members' goal to interconnect and to coalesce vegetarianism in the above sense of self-reform with communal holding of land and soil in the sense of socioeconomic reform in a kind of newly invented paradise garden.<sup>216</sup> In this immediate context Wilhelmi, who became the first president of the board, confidently declared: " 'Unsere vegetarische Obstbau-Kolonie ist von weittragender Bedeutung [...]Was wollen wir? „Eden“ ist der verheißungsvolle Name unseres Unternehmens; also ein Eden, ein Paradies wollen wir uns schaffen?[...] Entwickeln wir unser Programm, um Mitarbeiter zu werben. Im Paradies herrscht Friede: Lassen wir zunächst den Tiermord. Das Paradies ist ein Garten: In einen Garten wollen wir unseren Acker verwandeln, in einen Garten, der alle Sinne entzückt. Wir werden zunächst zu unserer Nahrung Wurzeln und Kräuter (Gemüse) sowie Obst säen und pflanzen, später Ziersträucher und Bäume, sowie Blumen zu unserer Freude. In Eden herrscht Geselligkeit: Geselligkeit wollen wir auch pflegen, Geselligkeit und geistiges Leben. Zu fruchtbarer Geistestätigkeit werden wir uns alle Grundbedingungen schaffen: Gesundheit, erworben und erhalten durch reine Nahrung[...]'. "<sup>217</sup>.

A kind of peaceful paradise garden without animal slaughter, but with lots home-grown fruits and vegetables, a rich biodiversity and being a forum for both social and intellectual exchange in general harmony were the primary goals of the colony as pathetically articulated by Wilhelmi in the latter statement. Furthermore, the colonists deliberately aimed at improving the people's health which again was framed as even improving the military and defence power of the German people among others. Permanently incorporating and confirming Oppenheimer's and Damaschke's rejection of colonization within the paradigm of land reform in overseas territories, the Eden founders as well aimed at reducing emigration from Germany as for instance to Paraguay. Rather, in their view Eden seemed appropriate for saving the urban metropolis of Berlin from overpopulation and unemployment while enhancing the quality of life in the rural space by the fulfillment of the above quoted goals and measures.<sup>218</sup> Evidently, all essential claims and demands of vegetarianism related to individual self-reform but carried out in a communal way as being promoted by Eduard Baltzer and the first Verein für natürliche Lebensweise, for instance Heinrich Lahmann's statements on self-sufficient small-scale agriculture as well as Adolf Damaschke's and Franz

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<sup>215</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p. 139 and cp. *ibd.*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel , pp. 125-127.

<sup>216</sup> Cp. *Linse*: „Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde“, p.37.

<sup>217</sup> Cited in *ibd.*, p. 41.

<sup>218</sup> Cp. *Uwe Spiekermann*: Künstliche Kost. Ernährung in Deutschland, 1840 bis heute, Göttingen 2018, p. 221.

Oppenheimer's contributions to set up rural communities or colonies within Germany against the backdrop of anti-urbanism and land reform reappeared under the umbrella of Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden. The founding documents stipulated that all future members must permanently strive for so called individual self-improvement concerning their ethical behavior and that waiver of alcohol and tobacco was mandatory next to the self-evident consumption of vegetarian food only.<sup>219</sup> Despite Franz Oppenheimer's initial reservations and skeptics concerning the competence of the first Eden members, he was even personally involved in drafting and composing the first statutes of Eden.

Notwithstanding, Oppenheimer could not become a proper member of the Eden-colony since he was not a vegetarian himself although appreciating the Life reform principles of the group in general.<sup>220</sup> Beyond the commitment to the wider goals of vegetarianism and land reform it was decided that houses and so called homesteads with a small area of private land for gardening should be built for the colonists. The first constitution of Eden defined that each colonist had the right to be given a homestead on the land of the colony for the purpose of a tenure. The money amount of the tenure should be negotiated between the members of the cooperative and the board of Eden. At the same time it was allowed to cultivate the land and soil of the homestead in an individual manner as long as vegetarian principles would be obeyed (which undoubtedly excluded to keep cattle for slaughter). Generally, animal husbandry as such as well as the systematic production of milk and dairy products was completely excluded in the regulations, only a certain livestock of goats and chicken for subsistence farming beyond the meat consumption would be allowed in the colony or on each homestead respectively.<sup>221</sup> Again, the homestead remained the property of the new cooperative-based colony which was legally not empowered to sell it in any case.<sup>222</sup> The land belonging to each homestead was a hereditary leasehold which implied that any speculation on land and soil was impossible, only future houses on communal land should be private property in the hands of the colonists. As such, the principle of cooperative-based farming was not extended to the full scope of arable land. Rather, the approach was to do the gardening in a cooperative-based way and to till the homesteads privately by the colonists. Each of them should make a capital contribution of 2000 Reichsmark to generate the financial

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<sup>219</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p. 132.

<sup>220</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p.140.

<sup>221</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Obstbaukolonie Eden, p.512.

<sup>222</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p.140.

basis of the cooperative.<sup>223</sup> Accordingly, Eden and its original constitutional character was a serious laboratory and projection surface to amalgamate vegetarianism and communal landownership being combined with ‘private’ economic elements which admitted a certain free personal development as had been elaborated by the more civic, liberal land reform theorists like Henry George and Franz Oppenheimer. At this point, we have to remember that the latter had been a public advocate of a so called third way between communism and capitalism in the context of bypassing the massive speculation on land in the urban areas for some years. He had brought to the fore his model of purchasing land collectively as well as holding and cultivating it in a cooperative for agricultural self-subsistence in the land reform circles. Oppenheimer now regarded the founding of Eden as evidence for both the plausibility and feasibility of his sociopolitical and economic theories.<sup>224</sup>

But way beyond all the intellectual preparations, discussions and the puzzling over the assumed best direction for Eden, the colonists had to reach a point of pragmatic realization, too. Primarily, it was crucial to find an appropriate area of land and soil which would fulfill the purpose of the colony. At the same time it was important to find an area not being too far away from the city of Berlin since many colonists, especially at the very first time of Eden, would need to stick to their other professional work and income and could only cultivate their homestead together with their families in their leisure time. Against this backdrop and due to limited financial resources the Eden-colonists accepted quite challenging climate conditions and circumstances concerning the soil fertility when they found an available piece of land close to the small city of Oranienburg in the Mark Brandenburg (30 km northwest of Berlin). The area they decided for was a former meadow for sheep and 147 acres in scope (one acre or the former Prussian agricultural measuring unit of one “Morgen” respectively encompassed 2800 square-metres).<sup>225</sup> As distinguished from Bernhard Förster’s vegetarian colony Nueva Germania in Paraguay which-referring to its isolated location in the primeval forest - even inherently contained ideological aspects of settler-colonialism like taming the wild nature, the Eden colonists had a different mentality. They consciously decided to stay close to other Life reformers as those in Berlin for being able to spread the idea of the vegetarian colonies more and more in society. Therefore, the fact that the Eden-area was located in a kind of separate corner far from the next massive regional military road but at the same close to the railway

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<sup>223</sup> Cp. *Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, haben wir die Zukunft“, pp. 22-23 and cp. *Baumgartner*: *Obstbaukolonie Eden*, p.512 and cp. *Linse*: „Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde“, p.38.

<sup>224</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: *Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich*, p.140.

<sup>225</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: *Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel*, p.130 and cp. *ibid.*: *Obstbaukolonie Eden*, p. 512.

tracks from Berlin to Stralsund, including the advantage of low prices for land, seemed to be ideal-typical for the vegetarians.<sup>226</sup> The group of colonists at Eden grew from 18 in 1893, to 92 in 1894 and to 150 until the turn of the century, after one year 22 homesteads were cultivated by tenants and round about 45 acres should be tilled in a communal way beyond the homesteads.<sup>227</sup> Of course the very sandy land and soil of the Eden colony and the geographical proximity to the city of Berlin implied different challenges and chances at the same time. In the first years the Eden members had to cultivate the sandy ground intensely and to create a fertile layer of humus on the ground before being able to grow fruit trees or vegetables to a noteworthy degree. Therefore, the colony became dependent on the import of horse manure and dung from the streets of Berlin and urban cow stables respectively. 1500 tons of such kind of (organic) street cleaning waste and 200 tons of agricultural lime got transported on boats from Berlin via water channels to Eden.

Julius Hensel, who had politicized the invention of his ground stone fertilizer so artificially by his discourse on an almost chauvinist would-be agricultural autarky of the German nation, became supplier of Eden as well. All the material had to be distributed on the land through hard manual work.<sup>228</sup> The Eden colonists moreover realized some measures which were particularly suitable to improve the ecological sustainability of their area. Hedge banks were planted as windbreakers on the flat area and for preventing the soil from erosion, even especially ash wood, oak, common beech and maple trees were used because of being much better for bird protection than other wood species. Concerning the fruits and produce to grow the colonists were extraordinarily conscious. They first and foremost selected particular varieties of apple, pear and cherry trees which were fructiferous every year and whose fruits were specifically suitable for being transported to markets or for being processed to bottles and cans. Linden trees should help to structure the area of the colony and function as a pollination habitat for bees.<sup>229</sup> In this sense and particularly referring to Wilhelmi's above founding declaration on the goals of the colony, Eden seemed to be the absolute counter project to the agricultural setting of Nordhausen. The latter with its mass production of grains

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<sup>226</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 511 and cp. *ibid.*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p. 130.

<sup>227</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 135- 137.

<sup>228</sup> Cp. *Winteroll*: Paradies im Sande, p. 2456 and cp. *Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, haben wir die Zukunft“, p. 27 and cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p. 160.

<sup>229</sup> Cp. *Jürgen D. Zierling*: Das Paradies von Nebenan, in: *Bauwelt* 83 (1992), p. 2467. Referring to the social implications of ecological aspects of gardening for the colonists for whom tilling the land of their individual homestead often was a serious secondary occupation cp. *Christian Böttger*: Zum Leben in den genossenschaftlichen Siedlungen „Eden“ und „Falkenberg“ vom Beginn ihres Bestehens bis 1933. Eine vergleichende volkskundliche Untersuchung der Lebensweise und Kultur von Bewohnern zweier Siedlungen im Berliner Raum, Berlin 1993, pp. 83-87.

and sugar beets which again propelled big livestock or meat production respectively had fueled Eduard Baltzer's activism on a healthy, so called natural lifestyle and vegetarianism so much years before. Not to be forgotten, this resulted in founding the first Verein für natürliche Lebensweise which for the first time claimed such a specific sense of mission concerning the role of food consumption and the allegedly right lifestyle. Admittedly, the colonists showed consciousness for the above so called animal problem referring to the use of land surface as a source of fodder for livestock which again had been stressed by Baltzer, Peterson and within some vegetarian cookbooks as a serious problem. At the same time these aspects seemed to have played only an indirect role insofar as livestock apart from the above little exceptions was prohibited and the pattern of land cultivation incorporated many measures to strengthen biodiversity by planting hedges, special trees or the like. But beyond this, there is no documentation about vivid debates at Eden in this thematic context. All in all these impetuses and goals seemed to be graspable during the inception of Eden as if there had been no temporal and structural difference in between the two happenings. On the other hand the whole background of the inception of Eden and the approach of its founders was much more elaborated.

Without doubt, the historical evolvement of both the vegetarian and the land reform movement after the time when the impulses of Baltzer's club in Nordhausen had radiated and (cookbook) literature on vegetarianism had been published was directly observable at Eden. But the colony not only seemed to be a counterworld to the setting of Nordhausen in the above sense. It obviously constituted a completely new sociopolitical reality being highly different from the former estate-based society in the East Elbian agrarian regions as well as from the living conditions in dense backyards of Berlin. The former reality was intensely marked by a strong social hierarchy and large-scale, partly even monocultural, agriculture. In the latter reality land was not available at all so that people like factory workers were more or less dependent on the new convenience products of the evolving food industry for their daily supply. Whereas for Eduard Baltzer and the first vegetarians' terms like "self-help" and "self-governance" had been essential to overcome hunger and to fulfill the preconditions for an intended future republican nation state, this aspect, based on the above historical facts and recognitions concerning Eden's time of incorporation, was obsolete now. Without doubt the colonists of Eden still demonstrated a quite deeply rooted understanding of self-determination in their above presented initial declarations, statutes and deeds. But as the overall fight against hunger and the founding of a German nation state cannot have been a serious political driving force for the Eden-colonists anymore, it must have been a certain understanding of self-help

and self-determination which was literally “only” self-referred and inward-looking in a structural sense. In spite of all interior striving, a twofold background almost brought Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden to the brink of the abyss and failure within its two first years of existence. Firstly, it was Bruno Wilhelmi who (by the way was the only one receiving a fix salary as the chief executive of the board) lacked both the financial and agricultural skills and took some wrong strategic decisions which seriously endangered Eden’s economic stability and further evolvement. Secondly, Oppenheimer’s above a priori critique that the core group of the Eden founders stemmed from the circles of intellectuals and artists in Berlin who were rather united by their anti-urbanism and by their inclination to romanticize the rural life of peasants than being accustomed to the hard farmerly work, proved to be true in many cases. These people simply were often unable to work manually that much and lacked the necessary agricultural knowledge.

In the winter assemblies of colonists and other Life reformers in 1894 and 1895 in Berlin the atmosphere was marked by “ ‘[...]Mißvergnügte[!], Enttäuschte und Verärgerte, sozialpolitische Einzelgänger, Leute, die die Wahrheit suchten, und solche, die schon ein fertiges Programm in der Tasche trugen, Bodenreformer, Freiländer, Egidyaner (Anhänger Moritz von Egidys und seiner „ethischen Kultur“), Ethiker, demokratische und anarchische Sozialisten, Sozialisten aus der Schule Proudhons, Carlylisten, konservative Radikale und radikale Konservative..., kurz eine bunte Gesellschaft von allerlei Zukunftsmenschen[...]’ “<sup>230</sup> who framed the social trajectory of Eden. In this context we probably have to proceed on the assumption that the majority of vegetarians among those who joined the assemblies and gradually grew into the Eden-cooperative came from the vegetarian milieu which again was marked by many “followers” in the above sense. Thus they were not as highly politicized as the “prophets” before. It therefore might be justified for us to presume that the stronger immediate political impetus in the colony was rather contributed by the land reformers against the backdrop of the urban social dislocations and their more coherent intellectual framework. The very heterogeneous milieu of vegetarian colonists, land reformers and of those ones potentially becoming a member of the cooperative forced the board to shift certain structures and principles, especially due to the above initial and apparently stabilizing economic difficulties. In this situation, Bruno Wilhelmi had to step down from his position as the chief executive of the whole colony. He was replaced by Carl Scheffler, an experienced farmer who as well had the necessary management skills and made possible the above indicated conscious

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<sup>230</sup> Cited in: *Linse: Nueva Germania*, p. 2454.

agricultural planning and progress since 1895.<sup>231</sup> Moreover, and this was highly essential too, Carl Scheffler and the lawyer Herrmann Krecke, who emerged as one of the very engaged activists, conceptualized and founded the so called “Oranienburger Bau-und Creditgesellschaft m.b.H” in June 1895. It was called “Eden-Bank” in the vernacular and was a small credit institution with limited liability. Its core backdrop was to face the continuing and severe financial straits of Eden, thus it aimed at increasing the permanent capital stock of the colony as such.<sup>232</sup> Thanks to the issue of mortgage bonds, which made people become credit grantors and in a way made them shareholders of Eden, the basic capital stock could be increased from 30.000 to 174.000 Reichsmark within a short period. At the same time, the Eden-Bank soon offered credits to exterior single colonists and even settler-cooperatives for building houses on the homesteads. The newcomers simply had to prove that they lived according to the values of land reform and general vegetarian ideas. These local small-scale capital flows helped Eden to flourish and to further enroot its philosophy. Mortgage bonds had an interest yield of 4 % and even encompassed the right to finance small-scale craft enterprises and business in the colony.<sup>233</sup> On the other hand the principles of Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden had to be defined down for the first time. Now non-vegetarians from outside the colony were allowed to buy mortgage bonds and thus became shareholders of Eden without living there.<sup>234</sup> It simply must have been pure economic necessity and pragmatism which made the board of the cooperative and the other colonists being in charge of their small bank to decide this way. Still today some scholars consider the Eden-Bank as the first bank which followed ethical guidelines, it is regarded as the precursor of such banks of the present time like the GLS Bank or others.<sup>235</sup>

Evidently, the above described sociopolitical heterogeneity in the assemblies of the Eden-cooperative, its accessibility for new interested people to join as well as the fact that now even non-vegetarians could become a member and shareholder of the cooperative by buying mortgage bonds widened the societal spectrum more than ever before in any vegetarian or land reform association. Thus it would be difficult to ascertain any specific ideological focus of vegetarians and land reformers at Eden concerning the time around 1895. As seen from a structural perspective it must have been extraordinarily easy for people of all different kinds of political or ideological camps to use the Eden- colony as a laboratory for interweaving

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<sup>231</sup> Cp. *Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, haben wir die Zukunft“, p. 25.

<sup>232</sup> Cp. *ibd.*, p. 27.

<sup>233</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Obstbaukolonie Eden, p.512.

<sup>234</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p. 141.

<sup>235</sup> Cp. *Dietrich Heißenbüttel*: Wirtschaftsreform, in: *ibd./bankleer/ Re:Form e.V. Oranienburg/Eden (eds.): Re-Eden. Neue Blicke auf die älteste Reformsiedlung Deutschlands*, Berlin 2019, p. 85.



vegetarianism, land reform and individual political interests. Referring to the institutional and processual regulations of the cooperative's daily business and policy all these above indicated kinds of members- from artists, novelists, very left wing socialists to extreme conservatives- could feel represented when it came to make decisions about the further development of the colony. Particularly in the first years of Eden each member could raise his or her voice for or against certain agricultural measures, social mechanisms or the like during the weekly assemblies.<sup>236</sup> In this period of a radically democratic self-image of the cooperative (as it was common very often in the cooperatives in various sectors of society during the era) people only had one voice concerning the decisions to be made even if they held a number of shares. In a way this was literally democratic and plausible concerning the goal of the colonists to avoid economic disbalances which could be detrimental to the destiny of the cooperative. At the same time the colonists were even legally entitled to intervene into important board decisions or into the policy of the supervisory committee of the Eden-Bank. This not only resulted in heavy battles of words but also in various conflicts and struggles which still menaced the agricultural success and both the overall social and financial stability to a certain degree.<sup>237</sup>

The strand of vegetarianism which arose from ethical love for animals or the rejection of killing any creature respectively, at the same time being enrooted in the idea of individual self-reform as self-help for a better life and a holistic understanding of pacifism as all together promoted by Eduard Baltzer among others, was still palpable at Eden. Some colonists represented this lifestyle. This approach probably still at Eden did not contain any further distinct political message and to a certain degree mirrored the lifestyle of organized vegetarianism of the late 1860s while ignoring the republicanism of Baltzer and the other prophets. Meanwhile, the latter purpose had become obsolete in a narrow sense.<sup>238</sup> The radical democratic approach of the cooperative implied the equality of votes concerning all matters of the colony and excluded any immediate private land property or capitalist speculation on it respectively. Therefore, it might mainly have attracted socialists among the colonists at first glance. Similarly, the issue of land reform potentially opened the doors for other ideological currents at Eden as well. This becomes more graspable when one keeps in mind the intellectual elaborations in the context of land use and vegetarianism as conducted by the above Heinrich Lahmann, Julius Hensel and, in an extreme version, by Bernhard Förster-

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<sup>236</sup> Cp. *Linse*: „Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde“, p. 52.

<sup>237</sup> Cp. *Böttger*: *Zum Leben in den genossenschaftlichen Siedlungen*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>238</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 165.

independent of the aspect whether the latter lived in Eden or not. As could be shown against the backdrop of their contributions or statements within the framework of both the vegetarian and the land reform movement in particular, nature as such took on an important role in both the circles of Life reformers and völkisch, nationalist activists. It was especially the latter who often interconnected vegetarian food consumption and land use in an ambiguous manner. The alleged supremacy of the German nation had become strikingly obvious on the field of vegetarians and land reformers. Firstly, this was articulated ‘through’ the so called laws of nature and the ontological self-embeddedness of actors into the natural environment ‘through’ vegetarian food consumption. Secondly, it became recognizable by the reference to nature as a projection surface and as evidence of the superiority of German farmers struggling for autarky on the basis of vegetarian subsistence agriculture.<sup>239</sup>

As we have seen, the would-be organic link to land and soil in some cases even integrated extreme ideological paths of anti-Semitism. Of course this phenomenon did not automatically stop on its own accord and per se at the fence of Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden. Some intellectual assumptions of the land reform movement inherently and indirectly contained some strands which could be misused for anti-Semitic standpoints. According to this specific view, large scale land-holding and its negative impacts on the “social question” in the urban areas could be avoided by a specific land law. Again, this land law entitled every housefather to cultivate the scope of land which was necessary to feed his family at maximum, but did not allow any additional access to land. Allegedly, these principles were emanating from the so called primordial times of the German nation which in the opinion of some contemporaries and corresponding to the zeitgeist (see Förster and Wagner for instance) had justifiably excluded Jews. Now, masterminds like Franz Oppenheimer and Adolf Damaschke, whose intellectual work was highly essential for the evolvement of Eden as is known, belonged to the founding members of the “Nationalsozialer Verein” (National Social Association) in 1896.<sup>240</sup> This association intended to promote the above alleged Germanic land law in the daily political discourses of the Imperial nation. Bruno Wilhelmi and other colonists of Eden in this time joined the Nationalsozialer Verein as members, too.<sup>241</sup> Although Damaschke once published an essay which strikingly coped with anti-Semitism, naturopathy and land reform altogether, he allegedly positioned himself as a decided opponent of any anti-Semitism. He did so by underlining his conviction that the “social question” can exclusively be solved by

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<sup>239</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: *Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich*, p. 48.

<sup>240</sup> Cp. *Böttger*: *Zum Leben in den genossenschaftlichen Siedlungen*, p.177.

<sup>241</sup> Cp. *Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, haben wir die Zukunft“, pp. 36-37 and cp. *Böttger*: *Zum Leben in den genossenschaftlichen Siedlungen*, pp. 176-177.

the adequate kind of land reform and that any misguided anti-Semitism would not help at all for coping with the social challenges of the time. Beyond that, Damaschke apparently rejected any aggressive and militaristic trends within the Nationalsozialer Verein.<sup>242</sup> While some vegetarians and land reform activists of other affiliated associations were generally open-minded for building up colonies and rural communities abroad due to socioeconomic reasons, Eden-colonists regarded inner colonization as a kind of service to the German people. Although we have already addressed this point when highlighting the general goals of the Eden-cooperative in the moment of its inception, it is crucial to emphasize another central aspect of the differentiation between exterior and interior colonization now. Even in the circles of Eden the so called race question became a relevant aspect while considering the amenities of inner colonization. The ideological paradigm of the “race question” implied that human beings of different “races” need different environments and cultural spaces to live. Thus migration to an area with land and soil which had not been a living space of the own “race” could lead to degeneration and decay in the view of many colonists.<sup>243</sup> Beyond all highly problematic racist assumptions which were inherently present in this understanding of Eden-colonists too, it obviously did not imply the colonization and installation of (vegetarian) rural communities in foreign areas as it did not work with a purported hierarchy of would-be superior German settlers. In this sense, the images and dynamics at Eden inherited some distinguishing features compared to the background of German settler colonialism in South America and the image of Lebensraum in the wake of Bernhard Förster’s entangled activities and references.

In the case of Eden it seems moreover remarkable that despite omnipresent hints in the scholarly literature on Bruno Wilhelmi’s inspiration by vegetarian colonies in South America<sup>244</sup> to become engaged on this field in Germany, there is no reference for anti-Semitism at all concerning his character. Theoretically, it could have been that Bernhard Förster’s agitation in the context of Nueva Germania in Paraguay might have had some influence on Wilhelmi. As these recognitions unambiguously make clear, the contemporary considerations and debates on colonization and setting up rural communities being dedicated to the implementation of vegetarianism and land reform are only fully graspable if we investigate them through the lens of a transnational, global space which again takes into

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<sup>242</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Vegetarismus im Kaiserreich, p. 49 and cp. *Böttger*: Zum Leben in den genossenschaftlichen Siedlungen, p. 177.

<sup>243</sup> Cp. *Anna Danilina*: Die moralische Ökonomie der „inneren Kolonie“. Genossenschaft, Reform und Rasse in der deutschen Siedlungsbewegung (1893-1926), in: *Ute Frevert (ed.): Moral Economies*, Göttingen 2019, p. 125.

<sup>244</sup> Cp. foodnotes 15 and 202.

account the interconnectedness and entanglements of both discourses and human agents on its own accord. Whereas emergence of 19<sup>th</sup> century vegetarianism in Germany could only be fully apprehended if the global connections and strands of both Eduard Baltzer's and Gustav Struve's religious or political background respectively are taken into account as well, the dimension of land reform seemed to open gateways for a more thoroughgoing politicization of land and food. Probably it was mainly the spatial boundary of land reform activities or at least its concrete reference to respective local sociopolitical challenges which made land reformers among the colonists (as in the case of Eden) by tendency another time appear as being even more political than former vegetarians.

Nevertheless, the matter of land, soil and food at Eden got as well further elaborated on the agricultural dimension in a narrower sense of the word and in a concrete manner. Precisely, it was the above Julius Hensel's ground stone fertilizer which attracted the attention of farmers, gardeners and Life reformers at and beyond Eden. It was for instance Karl Utermöhlen, one of the first settlers in the Swiss colony Heimgarten who conducted experiments in Heimgarten itself and at Eden.<sup>245</sup> The aim was to find out which kind of fertilizer would make possible to have high-quality food plants and crops in the largest amounts and could guarantee the food autarky of the German nation. His recipe was to mix Hensel's ground stone fertilizer, animal dung from Eden (the one being imported from Berlin) and only very few amounts of artificial nitrate fertilizer from Chile since the latter component was highly contested due to the debates on both agricultural and national autarky.<sup>246</sup> These experiments again provoked multifold reactions in the scene. Some reformers strived for fully abolishing animal manure to become independent on animals as such. Therefore they brought into play the Chinese small scale farming practices which based upon night soil and urban waste. We are exactly talking about those techniques which had been promoted by the vegetarian activist Maximilian Klein so emphatically before. Other agents like the above well-known naturopath Heinrich Lahmann used Hensel's experiments being carried out at Eden to draw the connection between the ground stone fertilizer, trace minerals and an assumed positive impact on human health.<sup>247</sup> According to Lahmann, who in a way tied in with the debates on nutrition between Virchow, Liebig and Baltzer which had initiated the vegetarian movement in Germany decades before, now claimed that the dominant agricultural paradigm in Germany apart from vegetarian colonies like Eden was based upon wrong nutritional theories. Following him, Germans could

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<sup>245</sup> Cp. *Treitel*: Eating Nature, p.158.

<sup>246</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>247</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 158.

easily get fresh fruits and vegetables. This was the food which they allegedly needed most for their health on a basis of local production instead of being dependent on imports. In Lahmann's estimation, the use of Hensel's fertilizer mix which was tested at Eden could bring the desired liberation concerning an almost full sovereignty of food and agriculture which again would additionally be healthy.<sup>248</sup> Against this backdrop the founding of Eden and the experiments with the soil must have been the ideal-typical realization of the alleged ideal-typical Chinese small-scale farming patterns from Lahmann's perspective after he had promoted self-sufficient agriculture on the basis of vegetarianism so enthusiastically in his book on the alleged degeneration of the blood due to wrong nutrition. After claims on the alleged higher quality of certain human beings and the superiority of the German nation had emerged in Lahmann's writings and among some other vegetarians and land reformers, such topics were partly further exploited to extreme degrees in an ideological sense in shape of different phenomena. For example the völkisch Life reformer Heinrich Bauernfeind wrote a song on Hensel's natural fertilizer which was called "The Ground Stone Song" and even pushed up Hensel's actual chauvinist and nationalist attitude. Bauernfeind embedded sheer xenophobia and anti-Semitism into his song and connected these aspects with agricultural matters on the right fertilizer.<sup>249</sup> In a completely different way the Eden-colonist and Life reformer Gustav Simons philosophized about the impact of either natural or artificial fertilizer on the so called better or worse racial quality of human beings after conducting agricultural experiments with the soil at Eden around the turn of the century.<sup>250</sup>

In a certain sense, the first harbinger of this thought, albeit in a non-chauvinist sense, was recognizable through Eduard Baltzer's above writings on vegetarianism which for the first time holistically interconnected agriculture, food consumption and the human body. Here and there, some of the colonists who felt both close to Simon's ideas as well as to nudism which became increasingly popular among Life reformers, started to speak of their own bodies as the so called "arisches Lichtkleid" when celebrating the energy of the sun nakedly.<sup>251</sup> Obviously, these phenomena could convey the impression that völkisch elements became rampant at Eden in the very late 1890s. By way of contrast, the scholar Ulrich Linse, an expert on the history of rural communities in Germany, states that a serious turn to völkisch ideology at Eden was only observable much later during the First World War and did not even directly

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<sup>248</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>249</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>250</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p.160.

<sup>251</sup> Cp. *Jost Hermand: Die Lebensreformbewegung um 1900- Wegbereiter einer naturgemäßen Daseinsform oder Vorboten Hitlers?*, in: *Cluet/ Repussard (eds.): Lebensreform*, p. 59.

continue after the war. Rather, Linse emphasizes that even before spring 1933 at all the Eden colony was not dominated exclusively by any specific ideological camp or political party.<sup>252</sup> Linse moreover condenses: “Und bereits im Kaiserreich hieß es, die Bodenreform-Kolonie *Eden* sei ein ‚alle Sozialreformer interessierendes Gemeinwesen‘ und ‚ein schönes Beispiel erfolgreicher sozialer Arbeit, die der Volkswirtschaft und der Volksgesundheit in gleicher Weise dient‘. Schon zur Gründungszeit ließ sich das ganze radikale Spektrum von links bis rechts von der Edener Utopie begeistern.“<sup>253</sup> Accordingly, it seems almost impossible to discern any clear political positioning of the Eden-colony as such by this time. All the same it is striking that, as compared with the strong emphasis on political liberalism within the purely vegetarian milieu and clubs between the late 1860s and early 1890s, both contemporaries and scholars of the vegetarian colonies or rural communities as in the case of Eden rather stress radically socialist and such conservative political standpoints concerning the spectrum of colonists. As far as is known in the wake of this research, however concrete remarks on liberal attitudes among the members of the vegetarian and land reform colony Eden are not explicitly ascertainable.

## **V.2. The future of food from Eden- new tools and products for permeating the sociopolitical environment of the colony**

In any event Eden was accepted as a corporate institutional member of the Deutsche Vegetarier-Bund at its federal assembly in 1897.<sup>254</sup> As seen through the lens of association policy beyond any specific ideological focus, Eden thus became a corporate lobby actor for reforming German foodways towards vegetarianism and land reform on the basis of small-scale cooperative farming throughout the whole country from that time onwards. In 1898 Hermann Krecke wrote on the functional role of the Eden -colony within the wide vegetarian movement: “ ‘Eden ist die beginnende Verwirklichung dieses Geistes, dieser Idealismus, dem der echte Vegetarismus dienen soll.’ “<sup>255</sup> This spirit apparently not only nourished the atmosphere of the vegetarian and land reform movement exteriorly, but generated a strong further interior evolvement of Eden likewise. In parallel, above measures and experiments concerning the soil of the cooperative seemed to have increased the fertility of the land to a noteworthy degree. In the wake of this overall development, many colonists who had become a member of the cooperative when being a lawyer, teacher, artist or having another middle-

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<sup>252</sup> Cp. *Ulrich Linse*: Völkisch- rassische Siedlungen der Lebensreform, in: *Puschner/ Schmitz/ Ulbricht (eds.): Handbuch*, p. 400.

<sup>253</sup> Cited in: *ibd.*, p.400.

<sup>254</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p.199.

<sup>255</sup> Cited in: *ibd.*, p.199.

class occupation now changed their professional life's journeys seriously to become gardeners or farmers.<sup>256</sup> In a nutshell, the ongoing cultivation of life as such in Eden became more and more palpable in an extensive scope. Beyond all ideological heterogeneity and different specific political attitudes, the members of Eden agreed with the common goal of a so called cultural regeneration of humankind through a reform of life. For them, Life reform had its primary root in agriculture and food and understood children as the human starting point for creating a better world. Following this philosophy consistently, Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden opened its own one-class primary school for children in May 1897 which was based on reform principles and became fully state-approved.<sup>257</sup> Despite this official approval it of course must not be underestimated that the school at Eden as well as pedagogic ideas of the Life reform movement as such strongly inclined to interconnect the romanticizing of agricultural paths through life, anti-urbanism and an escapist yearning for a life in isolated rural communities apart from the so called modern, industrialized society.<sup>258</sup> At the same time, a book bindery, being founded in 1897 as well, aimed at the indirect dissemination of vegetarianism and land reform thought and tried to get business orders from the circles of Life reformers in the region.<sup>259</sup> Hence, any full isolation of the colony would have been more than disadvantageous for its purposes and needs.

Unequivocally, binding books on vegetarianism and land reform at Eden once more stressed the deeply enrooted sense of mission of the colony. It in a way preserved and stabilized exactly this mentality of Baltzer and Struve and their followers which had become palpable in the vegetarian clubs of Nordhausen and Stuttgart as well as through Struve's book "Pflanzenkost. Die Grundlage einer neuen Weltanschauung" among others for the first time. Just shortly before, in 1895 even a small restaurant and guest-house based on principles of vegetarianism and reform-ideas opened at Eden. Later in 1898 the first colonists built an apple-juice factory where the harvested fruits from the land were processed and opened a cooperative-based shop for the sale of self-made food products to the broad public. Until 1900 even 15.000 fruit trees, 50.000 berry bushes, 3.000 hazel nut bushes, 20.000 rhubarb bushes and 200.000 strawberry bushes were planted and cultivated successfully.<sup>260</sup> The harvested fruits and partly vegetables were manufactured to juices, marmelades, jellies and spreads to a

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<sup>256</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Obstbaukolonie Eden, p. 512.

<sup>257</sup> Cp. *Scholz*: „Haben wir die Jugend, haben wir die Zukunft“, pp. 45-50.

<sup>258</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>259</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p. 167.

<sup>260</sup> Cp. *Judith Baumgartner*: "Natur ist unsres Lebens Quelle". Die Obstbausiedlung Eden Oranienburg bis 1918, in: *Christiane Barz (ed.): Einfach. Natürlich. Leben. Lebensreform in Brandenburg 1890-1939*, Potsdam 2015, p.46.

high extent and turned out to become a relevant economic factor for the cooperative.<sup>261</sup> Whereas vegetables (in the first years mainly potatoes, carrots, cucumbers and asparagus) were primarily grown for home requirements in the sense of self-sufficient agriculture and for the local market in the tiny town of Oranienburg, the above fruits products were increasingly marketed to urban consumers in Berlin. Especially ripe strawberries counted as luxury food in those years and were not only sold to gourmet food stores and in hotels in Berlin but also to consumers in the central market hall of the metropolis. Strawberries simply generated the biggest volume of sales.<sup>262</sup> While the raw produce were sold anonymously, the processed foods like the juices, marmelades and spreads were soon branded and marketed under the label “Eden” within the network of reform- shops in Berlin.<sup>263</sup> These vegetarian food products progressively infused the regional consumer market and Eden even won several awards for some products on an exhibition in 1901. Insofar, it was the first time that vegetarianism was systematically marketed and branded in shape of specific food products in an economic sense since its emergence in Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As such, foods like fruits and vegetables should morally become more valuable against the backdrop of vegetarian ethics.<sup>264</sup> Whereas these new market dynamics surely helped to finance daily life at Eden and enhanced its publicity, the food products as such as well as different economic aspects exacerbated the quarrels and discussions on the assumed right future way of the cooperative which had been characteristic since its very first regular assemblies.<sup>265</sup>

Moreover, dogmatic understandings of vegetarianism and the natural lifestyle among many colonists who directly lived at Eden spawned an unwanted effect. It was that less and less members of the cooperative who formally joined the community as shareholders of mortgage bonds wanted to become resident in one of the homesteads at the colony but rather preferred to remain in Berlin or elsewhere. Nevertheless, the board of the cooperative wanted to further promote the influx of new colonists and to spread their mission of vegetarianism and land reform.<sup>266</sup> According to these circumstances, Eden dropped the element “vegetarisch” of its name in 1901<sup>267</sup> and now was officially called “Obstbaukolonie Eden e.G.m.h.”<sup>268</sup> This implied a serious shift in the whole policy on vegetarianism and land reform since vegetarian

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<sup>261</sup> Cp. *ibid.*, p. 169 and cp. *ibid.*: Obstbaukolonie Eden, p. 512 and cp. *Spiekermann*: Künstliche Kost, p. 222.

<sup>262</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, pp. 160-161.

<sup>263</sup> Cp. *Spiekermann*: Künstliche Kost, p. 223.

<sup>264</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Ernährungsreform- Antwort auf Industrialisierung und Ernährungswandel, p. 161 and cp. *Danilina*: Moralische Ökonomie, p.125.

<sup>265</sup> Cp. *Winteroll*: Paradies im Sande, p. 2456.

<sup>266</sup> Cp. *Danilina*: Moralische Ökonomie, p.127.

<sup>267</sup> Cp. *Baumgartner*: Obstbaukolonie Eden, p. 512.

<sup>268</sup> Cp. *Linse*: „Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde“, p. 52.



food consumption in the narrow sense of the word was no longer mandatory for the colonists. At the same time, small-scale farming on the basis of vegetarian principles (no cattle livestock and no meat production etc.) remained binding and incontrovertible. Ethically, this was justified with a kind of strategic turn. From now onward, non-vegetarians should be proselytized and convinced step by step on the basis of a shared life on common land in the respective agricultural atmosphere.<sup>269</sup> Apparently, individual self-reform still was the starting point for any societal and political change in the world of vegetarians and land reformers as long as food consumption and agriculture would be natural, sovereign and be enrooted in a healthy soil (somewhere between Nordhausen, *Nueva Germania*, Berlin and *Eden* itself). For addressing the question what Germans should eat and how both social and political change could be encountered through agriculture and food, Eduard Baltzer's, Gustav Struve's, Franz Oppenheimer's and Adolf Damaschke's legacies seemed to be as present as ever at Eden and the associated fields of vegetarians and land reformers. While the immediate religious elements of Baltzer's vegetarian activism seemed to have vanished, the sense of mission was kept alive. A thoroughgoing definition of self-emancipation and sovereignty obviously were the right tools for Obstbaukolonie Eden to face the future of food within its wide political spectrum and to sustain its particular sense of mission. The picture and taste of what is natural and healthy, good, clean and fair food was the same for the Eden- colonists as for Eduard Baltzer and the Verein für natürliche Lebensweise.

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<sup>269</sup> Cp. *Danilina*: Moralische Ökonomie, p. 127.

## Conclusion

The question of quantities and qualities of food being available for the people in the German territories had become a very political factor in the aftermath of 1848 on its own accord. Surely, the availability of nutritious food and social peace were directly interlinked. Rudolf Virchow had politicized the discussion about animal source protein and meat for human consumption rhetorically by framing the availability of meat in the language of “humanity” and as a prerequisite for a desired future republican German nationhood. This almost automatically provoked respective counter reactions. Other politically liberal-minded actors like Eduard Baltzer recognized their own chance to cope with the topic publicly in a different way. Next to Baltzer’s liberal political attitude his personal life’s journey as a protestant pastor and a Christian religious agent who adhered to a certain sense of mission of course has to be consciously considered referring to his activities. Baltzer’s approach to take the exploitation of environmental resources, individual health and societal stability as an argumentative backdrop in favor of vegetarianism and a so called natural diet of course provided a new, very holistic and complex perspective. In this sense, his multivolume book “Die natürliche Lebensweise. Der Weg zu Gesundheit und sozialem Heil” indeed functioned as a groundbreaking work with immense definitive power and points of reference for future vegetarians from 1867 onward. At the same time vegetarianism and its meaning for both society and the natural environment unavoidably became an even more complex and contestable field. In other words, political dispute in a way now was enshrined into vegetarianism. Baltzer had touched so many aspects that political interests were affected on its own accord.

By his explications of what kind of food in his eyes was “natural” (e.g. both human mother milk and milk from animals versus alcohol, coffee and sugar) Baltzer moreover emphatically framed the understanding of “eating naturally” and of chemically unmodified, natural foods respectively not least because his above book became so influential. His argument according to which the human being and its blood in terms of health as well as the quality of agricultural soil highly depended on plant-based nutriments to the same degree blended different elements and dimensions to an inextricable extent. Thus he inherently ushered an interconnected organic understanding of food nutriments, the cultivation of land and soil and the human being in the discourse. Moreover, this perspective put the food consuming human being at the ontological center for considerations on the effects of a vegetarian diet. Obviously, Nordhausen with its specific characteristics of fertile land, grain production, huge livestock

and increasing meat production was both a highly challenging and appropriate socioeconomic exploration space and projection surface for Eduard Baltzer's theories on vegetarianism. Among others, the accelerating speculation on land and soil in Nordhausen in the context of meat production became a new determinant for claims of vegetarianism. This prompted Baltzer to reformulate and problematize the competition between food production for human beings and feed production for animals against the backdrop of limited land surface. What had been addressed as a causal link by Alexander von Humboldt before, was now reframed as a pressing socioeconomic inefficiency and was underlined as a serious political argument pro vegetarianism by Eduard Baltzer. At the same time, the meaning of land use as such became a known factor in the considerations on vegetarianism, still being further disseminated and catalyzed. Another very important aspect for the political involvement of vegetarianism undoubtedly was Baltzer's claim that only a reform of consumption in the sense of a vegetarian diet was a path to individual emancipation and sociopolitical independence for anybody, but first and foremost for hungry workers, who should fully rely on lentils, peas and fruits for instance. This kind of self-help was seen as essential for any national self-determination in shape of the intended future republican Germany by Baltzer. Therefore, self-help as such got equipped with a thoroughgoing political stance. According to the vegetarian understanding, sociopolitical transformation was enrooted in the behavior of the individual person and its food consumption in particular. If we take into account both the spiritual and rational roots of the Verein Lichtfreunde in Nordhausen, its specific sense of mission and its approach of regarding a vegetarian, "natural" diet as a religious and a natural law to the same extent, it appears as coherent that Baltzer and his adherents founded the Verein für natürliche Lebensweise. Surely, Baltzer was able to coin the first vegetarian club with an extra political stance as such thanks to his background as a former member of the Frankfurt pre-parliament and the Prussian national assembly.

The phenomenon that associations increasingly emerged as bodies of societal self-organization among mostly liberal-minded middle-class actors, additionally helped vegetarians to institutionalize their interest. It was exactly this context which could be used by Gustav Struve after having established his reputation as a radical agent fighting for liberalization and democratization on the way to a desired republican nationhood in Germany. Struve even politicized vegetarianism rhetorically more distinctly in terms of the liberal zeitgeist than Baltzer and regarded this way of diet as kind of sine qua non for any overall societal reform. Thus it was logical to found the Vegetarische Gesellschaft Stuttgart in 1868, Germany's second vegetarian club. The fact that his significant book "Pflanzenkost. Die

Grundlage einer neuen Weltanschauung” counted as less marked by academic discourses on nutrition than Eduard Baltzer’s publications, but instead as being more accessible to a wider public, slowly helped to blaze the trail for the discourse on vegetarianism. The case of vegetarianism making its way to public social life of course was additionally amplified by women like Amalie Struve, who started to give vegetarian cooking classes among others. Against this backdrop Judith Baumgartner’s analysis that the early leading vegetarian middle-class agents used vegetarian activism as a sociopolitical proxy function to articulate certain liberal political goals when the German nation state had not yet been founded, is very convincing. Most probably the vegetarian leaders did not understand the social and political challenges of the time indeed since they mainly highlighted the individual way of a healthy, vegetarian lifestyle. As regarded in conjunction with their lack of seriously grasping the social realities of the (hungry) workers they wanted to liberate, Eva Barlösius’ characterization of them being on a prophetic, but self-referential mission is fully plausible, too. Moreover, this impression gets fostered by the fact that no concrete political propositions or measures beyond the declaration of general principles are known of the “prophets”. Nevertheless, Eduard Baltzer, Gustav Struve and the first few vegetarian activists respectively established a very holistic understanding of vegetarianism. Their inclusive approach not least was marked by experiences, contacts and intellectual strands from the global trajectory of their (vegetarian) activism. Especially the paramount role of land use for the possibility of a vegetarian diet and societal self-organization, here in shape of the first vegetarian clubs, must be regarded as their distinct sociopolitical heritage.

Needless to say, the founding of the German nation state in 1871 was a watershed moment. The socioeconomic transformations as caused by industrialization and urbanization of course implied many wanted and unwanted effects which directly affected people’s daily life. The economic rationalization in agriculture precipitated a massive increase of prices for land in the countryside. The prices of building land in the urban areas and big cities like Berlin were propelled immensely by the emergence of factories, industrial sites and the influx of workers and their families from the former East Elbian rural regions. Among others, negative effects clearly were the poor wages for workers, heavy working conditions as such and the very confined housing conditions for big families in overcrowded backyards. Now, the “social question” which had been addressed by Eduard Baltzer and the other vegetarians before, primarily was not marked by severe food scarcity in general anymore. Rather, it was characterized by the shift of social dislocations to the cities which again mainly emerged in shape of hitherto unknown high prices for land and soil and difficult living conditions among

workers. The ongoing industrialization caused deep changes of the food supply structure too and economically marginalized people who still practiced small-scale subsistence agriculture in the cities and surrounding villages. At the same time the evolving central market halls and the implied improvement of food quality as well as the availability of “modern” food products can be ascertained as immense positive impacts of the time. In any event, these overall circumstances created much social and cultural space for debates on housing and land use policy, on agricultural policy and food production as well as on consumption styles.

Evidently, Adolf Damaschke was very receptive for the political and social needs of radical workers, intellectuals and economists after he had been marked by the lack of land for housing during his whole childhood. After he got in touch with Henry George’s foundational work “Progress and Poverty” and intellectually transferred the latter’s theories on both building land and agricultural land on the situation in Germany and in Berlin in particular, it was consequent to become politically more engaged on this matter. The cooperation with other activists who became engaged in the affairs of land reform like the industrialist Michael Flürscheim, again reaching other parts of the society’s political spectrum, made demands on land reform becoming a serious sociopolitical factor in the urban public. This effect got definitely corroborated by the newly founded Bund für Bodenbesitzreform and Adolf Damaschke’s commitment when he became the president of the league of land reformers. Whereas land reformers like Theodor Hertzka merely felt inspired to promote certain ideas about settling on allegedly free land in colonial territories abroad in an ambiguous manner, it was Franz Oppenheimer’s work *Freiland in Deutschland* which entailed serious sociopolitical approaches to the challenging issue of (limited) land use. Oppenheimer, who did not want not to expropriate and to nationalize land property as such opposite to some socialists, deliberately proposed his so called third way between communism and capitalism. He was the first one who contributed a complex draft to the ongoing debates in Germany which encompassed both considerations on agriculture (and thus food production) and land property. Admittedly, vegetarian standpoints as those of Baltzer’s claims on land use for either food or feed production were not explicitly mentioned by Oppenheimer in this incipient time of the land reform movement. But still, he broke fresh political ground by his assertive suggestion to coalesce both communal land purchase and holding, cultivating it in cooperatives and supplementing the agricultural work with other trades and services. Damaschke had not yet spoken in person on vegetarianism either. But public advocacy by the Bund für Bodenbesitzreform for so called Garden Cities as well as the fact that land reformers and vegetarians started to cross paths in the overall reform-minded Friedrichshagen-circle in

Berlin let new relevant networks evolve. A common ground for future social and political measures to be taken on the respective causes was spawned. Avowedly, the evolution of the Life reform movement as such seems to be fully understandable against the backdrop of many people's contemporary straits like rapid urbanization, the pollution of the environment due to industrialization and technization or the like. But it was not foreseeable that its protagonists, the urban middle-class intellectuals, had forged and functionalized vegetarianism, food production and consumption and land reform as the dominant nucleus of Life reform. This seems extraordinarily striking for observers of the present time and at least pertains to the political elements of the reform currents. Diet obviously was a red thread within the inherently flexible and contingent Life reform movement and thus touched vegetarianism and matters of agricultural land use on its own accord. Anyhow, the sociopolitical approaches of these two main boughs were not congruent. This becomes evident if we look at some ideological essentials of vegetarianism and land reform. The former was mainly marked by the "inherited" liberal virtues of self-determination and the human individual as a point of departure for any reform and the latter was dominated by community- and collective- oriented socialist thought (although George and Oppenheimer started to relativise the latter strand).

On a practical level, vegetarian cookbooks as those of Eduard Baltzer and Oscar J. Peterson embedded the matter of land use and of agricultural efficiency. Their statement that animal source ingredients like milk or cheese should only be taken in a very limited way as otherwise the natural environment and the land would be overexploited was a striking political appeal to readers and cooks. In opposite to the traditional or conventional culinary camp which now and then was guided by nationalist exhilarations- especially related to the French cuisine- vegetarian cookbooks did not pick up this trend. Rather, they stressed the inclusive and pacifist strand of vegetarianism as such and highlighted social harmony without referring to national boundaries. It was people like the Life reform naturopath Heinrich Lahmann who carved out an interrelated understanding of self-sufficient small-scale farming, limited land and high spatial density, soil quality and human health in his book on the so called "diätische Blutentmischung" as it had never been done before so explicitly. While claims on the benefits of Chinese small-scale agriculture are not verifiable as such in the context of the thesis' investigation, his references generally demonstrate a kind of global understanding of agriculture as measures and conditions were not reduced to the German farming tradition. But despite all intellectual flexibility when it came to the transfer of agricultural conditions and ideas of self-subsistence from alleged Chinese local settings to German regional contexts as

shown by Lahmann, his approach finally turned out to be simple and problematic. According to the zeitgeist, his arguments for small-scale self-sufficient agriculture for a German people mostly consisting of farmers becomes lost in simple nationalist exhilarations on an alleged German food autarky and in racializing German farmers against the backdrop of allegedly “better” blood thanks to “better” vegetarian food.

The vegetarian activist and Life reformer Maximilian Klein was convinced by the assumed benefits of small-scale Chinese agriculture to a similar degree. Saliently, he after all even declared the so called vegetarianization of humankind as a social law he wanted to follow. Both his book on the so called “*harmonische Lebensweise*” as well as his lecture tours even beyond Germany’s borders emphasized his holistic approach which in a way reminds of Baltzer’s perspective and activity. Without doubt, Klein clearly focused on the systemic usage of green manure for nourishing the soil of limited agricultural land as allegedly conducted in China instead of deliberately charging the matter of land and soil with nationalist contents. In this sense, the example of Klein shows that not all vegetarian activists were overly political beyond the socioeconomic and ethical arguments for their lifestyle and despite maintaining a sense of mission as it had been originally disseminated by the “prophets”. At the same time, the case of Julius Hensel and his ground stone fertilizer as a would-be recipe for German food autarky is a remarkable instance. It once more brings across that the aspect of land cultivation and food production partly got further coined with nationalist and even chauvinist impetuses by the late 1880s and early 1890s. The discourse of feeding the own national soil to feed the (German) people, being paradoxically nourished by global contents and trajectories, all in all had become more palpable in the context of vegetarian food and the availability of land. Nevertheless, the scene of vegetarians which had undergone an impressing process of institutionalization in shape of the various local clubs and the founding of the *Deutscher Vegetarier-Bund* in 1892, had remained quite apolitical by this time. After all 90 % of the members of the *Deutsche Verein für naturgemäße Lebensweise*, not to forget one core pillar of the overarching *Vegetarier-Bund*, stated that first and foremost health reasons and to much less percent ethical aspects like the love of animals were motivational driving forces for their activism. Furthermore, this image gets cemented by the vegetarian clubs’ neutrality referring to party politics and to denominational aspects in Imperial Germany. On the one hand the mostly middle-class vegetarian club members, who are justifiably called “followers” of the above “prophets” by Eva Barlösius were quite conscious for the challenges of food and agriculture in the era as compared with the majority of German consumers who ate meat independent of the agricultural conditions. On the other hand the clubs were not representing

the group of workers and former peasants, the ones being mostly struck by the social dislocations in the wake of food and land, at all. As is known, sociopolitical standpoints on the future of agriculture and food supply so far only played an inferior role among the majority of vegetarians in Germany. Thus we have to proceed on the assumption that the use or exploitation of land and soil due to the inherent connection of growing grains and raising livestock or the benefits of self-sufficient small-scale farming respectively had not entered the daily life of most vegetarians despite being stressed so emphatically in the books of the “prophets” who again had set free the spirit to found vegetarian clubs. Obviously, this implied a certain void regarding any further politicization among the majority of vegetarian consumers. But as Life reform, being first and foremost enrooted in the vegetarian reform of food consumption and land reform, in essence understood itself as “self-reform” of any adherent, it is hardly surprising that both the average vegetarians and land reformers needed more concrete spaces and projects to act out their attitude. The further proliferation of vegetarian restaurants in Berlin among others and the emergence of ideas on applying land reform thought in overseas territories without doubt were logical results of the zeitgeist.

Bernhard Förster in a way established the trend of vegetarians’ overseas migration for building up rural communities by founding his colony Nueva Germania. But probably he embodied a very specific example of applying both the colonial lust for land and vegetarian settlement. Surely, his radical anti-Semitism was deeply rooted in the respective völkisch and anti-Jewish circles of the Kaiserreich and got additionally nurtured by Richard Wagner and the influential Bayreuther Kreis. Undoubtedly, these circles helped him to interweave anti-Semitic agitation and vegetarian convictions, among others in the context of agricultural colonization and the installation of rural communities being allegedly appropriate for vegetarians. Anyhow, neither Förster’s advertisement for Nueva Germania in the periodical *Vegetarische Rundschau* in particular nor any scholarly documentation of vegetarian colonies in Belize, Chile or California in general indicate any anti-Semitic and völkisch element among German vegetarians who left their homeland to settle abroad. Nonetheless, German vegetarians who followed the overall trend of migration to overseas territories during the so called Gründerkrachjahre presumably consumed the travel reports on the pristine South American wilderness as a perfect space to rejuvenate the German nation from within, too. Thus it is not far so seek that they were covered by images of German supremacy and white settler colonialism or by the contemporary concept of Lebensraum respectively as well to a certain degree.



Regardless of whether the overall yearning for a rural life in the countryside in territorial Germany or already existing self-sufficient agricultural communities of Germans in South America were more influential on Life reformers- the Berlin tradesman Bruno Wilhelmi definitely received the impetus to found the first noteworthy vegetarian rural community in Germany during his stay in South America. After Wilhelmi's return to Berlin he and the 17 activists who founded Vegetarische Obstbaukolonie Eden in May 1893 and shortly thereafter started to settle in Oranienburg were fortunate to have met the right intellectual supporters. Now those land reformers who had ardently spoken for building up rural communities within Germany as shelters for a kind of alternative life instead of following colonial projects abroad, could bring their sociopolitical theories to the full practical potential.

Far beyond the helpful assistance of the Swiss fruit-growing cooperative Heimgarten referring to basic legal statutes to found Eden, above all Franz Oppenheimer's conception of a so called third way between communism and capitalism became the pivotal contribution of the time. Purchasing and holding land collectively, cultivating the soil in a cooperative-based style for agricultural self-subsistence and supplementing the communal work with special trades and services for the exterior public thus fully found its way into the constitution of the Eden-colony. Beyond this evidence for the concrete applicability of Oppenheimer's land reform theories, Bruno Wilhelmi and the other founders credibly pursued the vegetarian legacy of Eduard Baltzer and the "prophets". When they declared individual self-reform to be carried out in a communal way, the rejection of killing and eating any animal, the cultivation of fruits and vegetables for daily vegetarian self-subsistence, the waiver of alcohol and tobacco as well as planting trees and flowers while at the same time caring for social harmony and a vital intellectual life it seemed as if the declaration was a par for par transfer of Baltzer's essential writings. The cogency of the colonists' vegetarian and Life reform-based idealism without doubt got additionally underlined by their acceptance of the challenging ground and climate conditions when they bought the piece of land in Oranienburg. To cultivate the sandy soil by hard manual work after transporting all the horse manure, street waste and fertilizer from Berlin and moreover planting so many hedge banks, special woods and consciously chosen fruit varieties in any event extracted a lot of power and honest commitment from them. In a certain sense they were in the situation to live out the purported Chinese small-scale farming and self-subsistent rural-urban rotation systems which had been idealized by the vegetarian Maximilian Klein so much before. We have no hint that the matter of soil cultivation and self-subsistence was ideologically exploited by the colonists in the sense of Heinrich Lahmann's claims on the German nations' food autarky, on the degeneration of the blood of German

farmers or in the sense of Bernhard Förster's infamous anti-Semitic theories in the very beginning of Eden. Nevertheless, the colonists astonishingly framed their endeavor for human health as a tool to enhance the military defence power of the German nation among others. Particularly the political evaluation of the latter claim remains both inexplicable and incomprehensible against the backdrop of most vegetarians' pacifism and due to literally stylizing the colony as the Garden of Eden as done by Wilhelmi.

As seen from a socioeconomic and from an ecologic standpoint I would argue that the Eden-colony was the realization of a complete counterworld to the setting in Nordhausen. It should not be underestimated in this context that it was monocultural grain production, livestock farming as well as both meat and alcohol production which had brought Eduard Baltzer to the point of further elaborating his claims on vegetarianism and finally triggered the founding of the Verein für natürliche Lebensweise. Sociopolitically, Eden was a full counter project in another sense, too. Peasants had been strictly subordinated to the powerful landowners within the social hierarchy of the East Elbian regions. Later the poor urban living conditions of Berlin's dense backyards had cemented their workers' life being full of privation to a certain degree. Now Eden at least had the real potential to establish equal living standards and societal coexistence on the basis of "self-governance" and communal landownership. Pertaining to the level of politicization among colonists and those ones being interested in becoming a member of the cooperative, the winter assemblies of 1894/1895 indicated a clear direction. The fact that they attracted both radical socialists and conservatives as well as other quite radical adherents of various political camps is a conspicuous marker. Bearing in mind that the land reform movement surely was much more determined by specific political and ideological standpoints due to the social dislocations of time than the vegetarian milieu, we have to proceed on the assumption that land reformers were more politicized than vegetarians at Eden. The circles of average vegetarians within the overarching framework of Life reform simply were rather dominated by the above "followers" for whom a general reform of food consumption in the sense of new "healthy" products and vegetarian restaurants was more relevant than pressing issues of land use. The replacement of Bruno Wilhelmi by the farmer Carl Scheffler as the chief executive due to Wilhelmi's lacking skills and because of the general lack of agricultural knowledge among the first colonists of course does not contain an immediate message concerning political attitudes. But nonetheless it stresses the mostly academic background of the first colonists at Eden. Next to their original professions as lawyers, teachers or artists and due to not being accustomed to hard farmerly work, they were

surely more inclined to overly theorize vegetarianism, small-scale agriculture and land holding in a socio-philosophical sense.

Without doubt, the decision to issue mortgage bonds to outside non-vegetarians and thus making them potential shareholders of the cooperative in the wake of the founding of the Oranienburger Bau-und Creditgesellschaft or “Eden-Bank” , unleashed several effects. Among others, it widened the societal and ideological spectrum of people being involved in the colony. If we regard the latter effect in conjunction with the radically democratic principles of the cooperative referring to the equality of votes independent on the number of shares a colonist would hold, the influence of different sociopolitical ideas and goals to be realized respectively was quite balanced and controllable. This impression clearly gets fostered by Ulrich Linse’s scholarly ascertainment of the wide spectrum of political attitudes and ideologies among vegetarians and land reformers at Eden at least until the First World War. It seems almost needless to say that Heinrich Lahmann’s and Heinrich Bauernfeind’s particular experiments on soil fertility, accompanied by the respective chauvinist and anti-Semitic rhetoric, or the man-made, deliberate naturalization and racialization of both soil and human beings as promoted by Gustav Simons were examples of crude political misdirections by vegetarians at Eden. Adolf Damaschke, Franz Oppenheimer and Bruno Wilhelmi were both closely affiliated with the Eden-colony and members of the Nationalsozialer Verein which promoted land reform or the ambiguous so called Germanic land law throughout Imperial Germany. But just as little as the latter actors were provable chauvinists or even anti-Semites, not all vegetarians at Eden who were committed to the issue of soil fertility and production of “healthy” food took up such problematic political positions as the above Life reformers who rather used Eden as their laboratory. This impression gets once more emphasized by a quick reflection on the global trajectory of Eden’s inception in the wake of emerging rural communities in both the different paradigms of white settler colonialism or of the Life reform movement respectively. The first vegetarians and land reformers of Eden after all spoke against setting up rural colonies abroad decidedly. Furthermore, they did not agree with the image of racially superior German farmers taming the so called wilderness in specific regions of South America for instance. Rather, the production of natural foods for the local market halls and reform-shops in Berlin, the development of Eden’s own pedagogic institution and culinary venue in shape of the school, the book bindery and the restaurant as well as dropping the word “vegetarisch” of the colony’s name in 1901 underlined the multifold sociopolitical spirit of the colony in its German territorial setting in a placid way. Unequivocally, this all made clear that individual self-reform in a communal setting was still

the starting point for any social and political change in the world of vegetarians and land reformers. As such, Eduard Baltzer's liberal approach of self-emancipation on the basis of healthy vegetarian food for the people and the environment, forging a bridge from the soil to the plate, reshaped any other sociopolitical spectrum and specific political goal at Obstbaukolonie Eden as never before. For sure, vegetarians and land reformers in Germany between 1867 and 1901 eventually would have fully agreed with Wendell Berry's proposition that eating is an agricultural act.

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## **Eidesstattliche Erklärung**

**Ich versichere an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig ohne fremde Hilfe und nur mit den angegebenen Hilfsmitteln verfasst habe.**

19.12.2019

Frederik Schulze-Hamann

Datum

Original-Unterschrift