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In search of a new Eden in the twentieth century: the Portuguese and the establishment of naturist colonies in Brazil

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Abstract

This article is part of a project that is studying the beginnings of vegetarianism and naturism in Portugal. It contextualizes the connection between the two realities, then ascertains how widely naturist ideas were spread in Brazil, especially in the Pará region, through the establishment of a short-lived naturist colony in Boim (on the Tapajós river) and the abortive plans to create one on the outskirts of Belém. Other efforts to spread vegetarian and naturist ideas included the importing of Portuguese magazines and books and the founding of vegetarian and naturist societies in different Brazilian towns and cities. It is therefore important to problematize and interpret these paths through unpublished sources.

Keywords: Amílcar de Sousa (1876-1940); naturist colonies; Pará; Portugal.

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> Happy are they who live in the tropics! The inhabitants of hot countries may never go hungry! And those who need to eat a little more need them (Sousa, 1912, p.65).

The precursors and foundations of vegetarian discourse in Portugal

Although the consumption of vegetable foodstuffs was first advocated in the Indian philosophical tradition, in particular through religions like Hinduism and Buddhism (Trotignon, 2011, p.243-292), it was during the Classical Antiquity, especially with Pythagoras (c. 570 BC-c. 495 BC), Plutarch (c. 46 AD-120 AD), and Porphyry of Tyre (c. 234 AD-c. 304 AD), that a strong defense of such a posture was voiced in western culture (Soares, 2011; Dias, 2012; Bernabé Pajares, 2015; Pinheiro, 2016; Spencer, 2016), even if it remained very muted during the Middle Ages (Niola, 2015, p.63-74; Larue, 2015, p.16-66). The debate, especially in the field of medicine, was developed from the seventeenth century, and focused primarily on the evils of consuming meat. Important contributors to the discussion included Louis Lémery (1677-1743) and Philippe Hecquet (1661-1726) in France (Perrot, 2011, p.294), John Arbuthnot (1667-1735) and George Cheyne (1671-1743) in England (Morton, 1998, p.53-88; Rauw, 2015, p.13-14), and Antonio Cocchi (1695-1758) in Italy (Mannucci, 2008, p.180-183). Despite these and other positions in favor of vegetarianism in the west (Baratay, 1996; Berkman, 2004), it was only in the nineteenth century, especially as of the 1850s, that it actually became fashionable. The term "vegetarian" was coined in the late 1830s and became generally accepted as of 1847, when the Vegetarian Society was founded in Ramsgate, England. The new society had a publication, *The Vegetarian Messenger*, which it used to spread its ideas, with many of the articles stressing the moral and spiritual benefits of abstaining from meat (Twigg, 1981; Miller, 2011, p.154).

In Portugal, it was only in the early decades of the twentieth century that vegetarian and naturist discourses gained ground, especially due to the action of the members of the Vegetarian Society of Portugal (Sociedade Vegetariana de Portugal), established in Porto on March 1, 1911. Its founders were the committee members of *O Vegetariano* (The Vegetarian) (1909-1935), a magazine published on an irregular basis whose editor-in-chief was Amílcar de Sousa. The founding committee was made up of several public figures: the aforementioned Amílcar de Sousa as chairman, Jerónimo Caetano Ribeiro as secretary, Manuel de Oliveira Borges as secretary, and two vowels, Eduardo de Lima Lobo and Manuel Teixeira Leal. The honorary chairman was the writer and literary critic Jaime de Magalhães Lima.

The connection between vegetarianism and naturism can be seen from early on. The followers of both practices shared a similar set of ideas: the benefits of water, fresh air, sunshine, and a life spent in contact with nature, with a natural diet free of fish and meat, while also attacking the ills of tobacco, stimulant beverages, and alcohol. Naturists and vegetarians agreed that failing to live in harmony with the laws of nature was the main cause of human ailments.

The most important vegetarian activist was undoubtedly Amílcar de Sousa (1876-1940). A physician who had graduated from the University of Coimbra in 1905, he joined the naturist movement in 1910 after becoming a vegetarian. He wrote several books designed to spread the word, all of which were reedited and some of which were translated into Spanish, the main works being: *O naturismo* (Naturism) (1912), *A saúde pelo naturismo* (Health through naturism) (1916), *A cura da prisão de ventre* (How to cure constipation) (1923), *Arte de viver* (The art of living) (1926), *Banhos de sol* (Sunbathing) (1937), and a naturist novella, or, as it would be called today, a utopia, entitled *Redenção* (Redemption) (1923), not to mention over one hundred articles published in the specialized press.

Amílcar de Sousa's discourse in referring to non-vegetarians, which was sometimes aggressive in tone and almost always outspoken, in a bid to convince meat eaters to give up all consumption of flesh and animal produce, was not entirely original. It was modeled on the writings of foreign vegetarians and naturists, whose texts he knew well as an avid, well-traveled reader, often alluding to new discoveries made by other naturists. He also translated several books and spearheaded the development of a naturist collection in Portuguese – a collection of several dozen publications, brought to public attention in the end pages of the aforementioned magazine, *O Vegetariano*, and also in *Almanaque Vegetariano Ilustrado* (Illustrated Vegetarian Almanac) (1913-1922), of which he was also the director. He also gave dozens of talks in Portugal, Spain and Brazil. All of which made Amílcar de Sousa not so much a creator as a spokesman, a missionary, and an apostle of vegetarianism and naturism, who drew on whatever means were within his reach to win over and convert new followers, aiming his criticism particularly against the consumption of meat (Braga, 2018).

The language used by naturists and vegetarians was sometimes exacerbated. Expressions like "made of blood and fire" (Sousa 1916a, p.XIX) or "cadaveric foods cooked with fire" (Sousa, 1937, p.106), which Amílcar de Sousa used, were consistent with the language of other naturists to refer to meat eating. His rejection of meat also prompted him to refer to it as a "wild food suitable for cruel wolves and bloodthirsty hyenas" (Sousa, 1923, p.89). In a similar vein, he also advocated ideas like "Man, ridding himself of the shackles of fire, does not need a kitchen, whose main product is death" (Sousa, 1916a, p.87), or "Man is a pure frugivore, yet, in a transitional diet, milk, eggs, and honey are permissible foodstuffs; what is not permissible is meat from the corpses of animals" (Sousa, 1916a, p.61), or even "eating cooked foods one cannot live but in continuous physiological deprivation. And if we deprive ourselves of light on our body, our blood becomes anemic and completely disfigured" (Sousa, 1937, p.67). Consequently, vegetarianism based on eating fruits and raw foods was the only really acceptable diet, and should be accompanied by physical activity and exposure to the sun: "A kitchen garden is a dispensary. An orchard, a dining and luncheon room. All this if we gather plants and go out to pick fruits in our simple attire, in the fresh air, in the daylight and sunshine" (Sousa, 1923, p.92). This kind of discourse was recurrent and was often clumped together into a kind of list of instructions containing several points to be followed (Sousa, 1916a, p.335-336, 341-342; Sousa, 1916b, p.77-78).

Alongside this virulent attack on the consumption of animal flesh and products, other foods were equally condemned: wine and alcohol in particular, as well as stimulant

beverages, sugar, salt, and the use of tobacco, which, while not a food, was included in the group of products he opposed. The language continued to be exacerbated. Eggs were understood as being "harmful for human consumption" (Sousa, 1916b, p.46), salt was "a subversive agent of cooking" (Sousa, 1923, p.46), and tobacco was "an evil [that] has invaded civilized peoples. It is the bedfellow of alcohol and meat, an ally of gambling and depravity" (Sousa, 1934, p.16,81).

There should be a gradual transition from a meat-eating to a vegetarian diet, first consuming the non-vegetarian foods in just one meal a day until completely eliminating them from the diet (Sousa, 1916a, p.335-336). The same was called for when adopting a frugivorous or raw-food diet, the most refined of ideals, without, however, ever being accepted unanimously. Amílcar de Sousa (1916a, p.28) advocated, rather idealistically, that:

> Artificial and habitual treatments would cease to exist and equally abattoirs and butchers' shops, fish markets and fishmongers, the cafés and restaurants we have today, the harmful kitchens and cooks, the wineries and breweries that manufacture products by fermentation etc., would make way for the widespread establishment of orchards and vegetable gardens. Cows' milk would be fed to their calves, and goats' to their kids, and hens that lay eggs would not be 'grown' for this purpose ... we could also use ground cereals to make raw doughs with the juice of fruits, like orange or tangerine, without the evils of cooking or soaking.

Jaime Magalhães Lima's (Ribeiro, 1923, p.24) approach was more realistic:

> I strongly believe that cooking is still a valuable part, that it is here to stay and to grow; and I ask God to protect it, for not only does it deserve this, for its many and complex virtues, but it clamors for it because, while it is well known to a small minority, it is still little known by the vast majority, who barely know how to cook a pot of clean cabbage properly in pure water with the right proportion of seasoning and boiled only to the point at which its flavor and digestibility attain the right degree. I believe that cooking is an institution that with time has not grown grey hairs and is ever being renewed, although I, very moderately, use it for its delights and benefits and do not deny that its bounty has led to many vices and the disgrace of many good folk, in their naivety and simplicity. It is true, I seek to free myself as far as I can from its tyranny, but I am not a rebel of its empire, which claims legitimacy that is very hard to contest, as I see it.

The anti-meat-eating discourse inevitably implied saving animals. Although no member of the Vegetarian Society of Portugal defended the sanctity of animals' lives, Amílcar de Sousa (1923, p.51-52) did refer to them in terms of sympathy and appreciation:

> A butchery is a disgusting place. A slaughterhouse is a site of massacre. To see a serene cow or a mild lamb clubbed to death is a shocking spectacle. Nobody with any feeling of kindness is capable of killing, in cold blood, a white dove cooing in the dovecot or a chicken with soft, multicolored plumage that lives in the wood. To have a living eel fried or shrimp lowered into boiling water is clearly not a glorious or heroic act.

To lead a balanced naturist life, a person must have self-discipline, do physical exercise, take fresh air and sun, bathe, wear loose, airy clothing, wear open-toed shoes, live in a house with a terrace, garden, or backyard, with large windows and a bathroom with a bathtub or

shower, abstain from smoking, and adopt a diet free of meat, fish, alcohol, tea, coffee, and cocoa. For some, raw fruits were the most appropriate. Others, less radical, chose not to adopt exclusive frugivorism, much less raw foodism. Either way, people should ideally live in the tropics, because the climate was propitious for exposure to fresh air and sunlight and, especially, because it had a wealth of different types of fruit. Amílcar de Sousa (1923, p.49) made this clear repeatedly: "To be happy, man must return to Eden, which is anywhere in the tropics. There, the sun and the water, the air and the light, make the naturist man healthy and wealthy. The experience of civilization is done. Instead of peace, war; instead of love, hate; instead of joy, sorrow".

Vegetarianism and naturism: from Portugal to Brazil

In its bid to convert people and propagate the ideas of vegetarianism and naturism, the Vegetarian Society of Portugal accepted members from different parts of Brazil and published letters and photographs of many of them in *O Vegetariano* and *Almanaque Vegetariano*. These publications also carried recipes using Brazilian products, while also informing their readers about vegetarian and naturist societies set up in Brazil. All the society's publications, including the two aforementioned magazines, were sold in Brazil, where they could be acquired at seven different outlets in 1913 (O Vegetariano, 1913b, p.64). In 1920, Amílcar de Sousa made a frustrated attempt to publish a Brazilian edition of *Arte de viver,* for in 1934 it was reported that "this volume, adapted, expanded, enlarged, unabridged, and final was delivered on his visit to Brazil, in 1920, to the Sociedade Vegetariana Brasileira [Brazilian Vegetarian Society]. However, it was never published because of circumstances beyond the author's control" (O Vegetariano, 1934, p.97). This is a whole other matter that could be investigated and developed, ideally in the near future.

Table 1: Establishments that sold the publications of the Vegetarian Society of Portugal

City or Province	Establishment	Address
Rio de Janeiro	Adaucto Neiva	Av. Passos, 28
Rio de Janeiro	Livraria Cruz Coutinho	Rua de São José, 82
Pará	Livraria Martins	Travessa Campos Sales, 11
Manaus	Lino Aguiar & Companhia	Rua Principal, 87
São Paulo	Jorge & Companhia	Rua de São Bento, 51
Pernambuco	A. Pasini	Rua do Livramento, 22
Porto Alegre	Octaviano Furtado	Rua da Azenha, 146

Source: created by the author.

In the current state of the research, it can be seen that the societies being set up in Brazil were a cause for admiration and comment in Portugal. In 1913, for instance, the Brazilian Naturist Society (Sociedade Naturista Brasileira) was established in downtown Rio de Janeiro, at Rua do Ouvidor, 22. The Portuguese Vegetarian Society sent its good wishes to its counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic:

> Brazil is a big country with a notable lack of any humanitarian and altruistic collective movements to expound and explain the benefits of a fruit-based diet, an open-air lifestyle, physical exercise, and sun, which radiates so much energy on that blessed land! Brazil is, from north to south, an Eden, an unbroken paradise, with its virgin forests, its orchards and vegetable gardens, where the best fruits in the world are to be found. Brazil is the home of the banana tree, which of itself fulfills all Human nourishment needs! Yet the fruits are neglected, the forests cut down, the gardens poorly tended. Brazilians do not worship nature (O Vegetariano, 1913a, p.381).

Not all the societies created in Brazil were the result of influences from Portugal. A Russian, Eliezer Kamenesky (1888-1957), was pivotal in the creation of some. He was a Jewish naturist, born in Russia and a traveller throughout Europe, the Americas, and Asia, sometimes as a stowaway, as was the case of his voyage, aged 15, from Odessa to London. He had studied piano and singing, but had lost his voice. Aged 19, he had read a book by the Polish vegetarian doctor Konstanty Moes-Oskraguiello (1850-1910) and had decided to become a frugivore. By 1919, he had put down roots in Portugal, later marrying Arnilde Roque Penim. He was a poet, a musician, and an actor, and became well known for his secondary roles in the films *A revolução de maio* (The may revolution, 1937) and *O pai tirano* (The tyrannical father, 1941), by António Lopes Ribeiro, and *O pátio das cantigas,* (The courtyard of the ballads, 1941), by Francisco Ribeiro. In all three films he played Russian characters: the communist Dimoff in the first, the refugee Ciriloff in the second, and a character called Boris Dunov in the third (Torgal, 2010; Vieira, 2011). In *O pátio das cantigas,* according to an article in the magazine *Animatógrafo* (10 nov. 1941), which included a photograph of the actor playing the cello in the midst of several animals, the home of his character, Boris, was a paradigm of harmony.

As a naturist and vegetarian, Eliezer Kamenesky wrote a novel based on his own life that was translated into English by Fernando Pessoa (Kamenetzky, 1918, p.44-47; Castro et al., 1992). He was devoted to spreading the word about his life choices, giving talks on the subject, even in Brazil. In one such lecture in the Brazilian state of Bahia, the typewritten manuscript of which was found among his papers after his death, he referred to the three curses of humanity – meat, alcohol, and tobacco – making it clear that he understood meat eating to be a distortion and prostitution of civilization (Espólio…, s.d.), mirroring the prevailing naturist and vegetarian discourse.

Cândido Craveiro, about whom we will hear more later on, whom he met in Brazil in 1916, wrote an article in *O Vegetariano* called "An apostle: Eliezer Kamenesky." In it, he provides some background information on the Russian, stressing that he had been stoned in New York and Rio de Janeiro for going about wearing just a tunic, and that he had been arrested nine times in Rio and São Paulo (Craveiro, 1916b, p.339-340). In November 1916, the same magazine put Kamenesky on its front cover. This kind of radical image, identified with anarchic Neostoicism, came close to the image of the vagabond, with his long hair and beard, tunic and sandals, much like figures such as Marius Clayol, in France (Baubérot, 2004, p.209).

In Brazil, Kamenesky (1917, p.326-327) was involved in the founding of the vegetarian societies of Bahia (1917), Paraíba (1917), and Santos (1917) (O Vegetariano, 1917b, p.225,

263), as well as the Naturalist Center (Núcleo Naturista) of Pernambuco (1917) (O Vegetariano, 1917a, p.401). In Paraíba, he gave a talk that was attended by state officials in the great hall of the Institute of History (Instituto Histórico) (p.402-403). However short-lived these projects were, they were surely responsible for his claim, in an interview for *A Pátria* in Portugal, after returning to live there, that the country where he had been most warmly received was Brazil: "There, my mission dug deep roots, as well as the best of welcomes; I founded many naturist societies" (Um profeta…, 1920, p.81-82).

Back in Portugal, Eliezer Kamenesky was a sporadic contributor to *O Vegetariano,* and was also mentioned in texts published in it by other authors, such as Lopes de Castro (1919, p.7). In one of his articles, Kamenesky (1919, p.41-48) insisted on the importance of bathing, wearing the right clothing and footwear, adopting a vegetarian diet (as opposed to eating meat, drinking stimulants, and smoking), while also reflecting on modern industry.

The advocacy of such ideas did not escape the satire. In 1920, *O Século Cómico: suplemento humoristico de O Século* (The Comic Century: humoristic supplement of O Século), in his section "In Focus", published, under the pseudonym of Belmiro, a drawing of the actor with his long hair and beard and a sonnet that poked fun at vegetarianism, which he certainly advocated vociferously, since he was already well known for it:

> Eliezer, Russian of good name,
> Whom all may cross on the street,
> Disgust at beef and meat
> Does preach without refrain.
>
> That flesh is good is avowed
> By him to be far from true;
> He himself eats grass without ado,
> And is strong, stout, and proud.
>
> Others may doubt, not I,
> That plants we all do need,
> Oats, grass, herbs, hay, rye
> For years now – why disagree? –
> That a lurking sense have I
> That we are a kind of steed...
> (O Século…, 12 abr. 1920).

Kamenesky left Portugal in the mid-1920s, albeit for a short period. At this time, Amílcar de Sousa (1920a, p.97) referred to him as a "wandering symbol of the simple life, a soul dear to nature," adding that "your faith is strong. Your example is fine". Maria O'Neill (1920, p.99) dedicated a sonnet to him. *O Vegetariano* also published "Prayer to the Sun," "Portugal," and "My farewell," by Kamenesky (O Vegetariano, 1920a, p.98, 116). By October 1921, he was back in Portugal and an interview with him was published. He said he liked Portugal, but regretted the existence of so many taverns, gambling establishments, cafeterias, and prostitutes (O Vegetariano, 1921a, p.326-327).

By 1927, Kamenesky was running the risk of being deported. The Portuguese government suspected him of being a subversive element, which made him an "undesirable." The response of the Portuguese Naturist Society was to hold a public session in his honor and in solidarity with him, which took place on April 14 at the Free University of Lisbon (Universidade Livre de Lisboa) (O Vegetariano, 1927b, p.118). They claimed that the intent of expulsion had been motivated by "fake news" and continued to make every effort to get the government to give up its plans (O Vegetariano, 1927a, p.152).

The founding of naturist colonies in the search of a new Eden

The idea of establish naturist colonies was first put into practice in Europe and Brazil in the first half of the twentieth century. In Switzerland, a mixed group of youths, including Henry Oedenkoven and Ida Hofmann, founded Monte Verità (Ascona), a vegetarian colony, in a bid to find a life of healing, natural clothing, the rejection of vaccination, and the regeneration of the body through fresh air, water, and a vegetarian diet. Organized according to the principles of utopian socialism, it quickly turned more into a sanatorium. It was known about in Portugal, because in 1915 an article published in *O Vegetariano* gave information about its founding 12 years earlier, i.e., in 1903. M. Diaz de Wilke (1915) referred to it as a very pleasant place where everything was well organized, in accordance with naturist practices:

> The two spaces we have, one for gentlemen and another for ladies, have woods and green fields. We take cold baths in the open air and have a house for hot baths, made almost completely of glass, with as much air as possible, which is dry and warm for those who like this environment or those who need it to relieve their rheumatism (p.20).

As the idea of paradise, a new Eden, was associated with the tropics, the New World represented an ideal stage, and Ida Hofmann ended up establishing another colony, Monte Sol, in the Palmital region of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Began sometime between 1921 and 1923 – two decades after the Swiss colony – it was geared towards delivering natural healing methods in spaces where the qualities of the environment would be captivating and reinvigorate those who stayed there. The property that was acquired, which proved relatively insalubrious, and the lifestyle of those who went to live there combined to result in its failure within just four years. It was followed, however, by a new attempt in the municipality of Catalão, Goiás, in the 1930s, but this also had similar results, constituting another failed attempt to build a new Eden (Christol, 2015).

While it is not known whether Amílcar de Sousa knew about Monte Verità before writing his work *O Naturismo*, first published in 1912, there can be no doubt that, given his admiration of the tropics, he had plans to set up a colony there even before the First World War. To this purpose, he put together a strict framework, which drew it close to the utopians:

> We would choose a healthy spot served by speedy communication, a railroad, a periodic packet. We are sure that at half an hour's distance from any tropical town a naturist colony could be founded. Let us imagine still virgin land, served by a water

> course, on sloping land with good, fertile soil. A simple building would be erected with impermeable materials that industry could supply. It would be a great shelter, like a great hat, to keep out the rain, and to protect from the great inclemency of the sun and of storms. Inside, a pool of clear running water, a library, and a large meeting room. This is the shared house, the 'House for All.' There would be rooms for the sick who arrived, for them to repose. Rather than being of glass, the windows would be made of a fine mesh (Sousa, 1912, p.67).

Amílcar de Sousa continued to describe the model naturist colony: modest houses decorated inside with murals and outside with statues and tiles. And he went further, prescribing the clothing of the members: pajamas, sandals or boots made of interwoven thongs, and straw hats for the men; Greek-style tunics, hats decorated with flowers, and sandals for the women. Children would wear light clothing so they were free to move about. To fill their time, they would grow fruit trees and engage in simple craftwork. There would be no servants, and daily activities would include ablutions, physical exercise, and sunbathing. The women would care for the children, and the men would take on whatever tasks they were best equipped to do. Meals would be based on fruits – bananas, oranges, limes, lemons, pineapples, peanuts, Brazil nuts, pine nuts, and walnuts – and at the end of the day there would be time for ablutions, more exercises, games, entertainment, and talks about naturism. Finally, there would be time to teach the children their lessons.

Shortly after setting out these plans, in 1914, two Portuguese men set off for the Brazilian state of Pará: Ernesto Borges, who had worked at the Vegetarian Society of Portugal's publishing house and had set up Casa Branca, an establishment that served vegetarian meals in Galerias de Paris, Porto, and the illustrator Cândido Craveiro. They travelled in the same year, but on different ships. They settled on the lands of a Portuguese man, Joaquim Pedro Gameiro, with the aim of establishing a frugivorous naturist colony in Boim (on the banks of the Tapajós river), of which no trace remains. According to Amílcar de Sousa, they wanted to create an Eden in the twentieth century (Sousa, 1914b, p.167).

By May 1914, Ernesto Borges had already reached Pará, counting on the assistance offered by the vegetarian Camilo Velhote and his brother-in-law, Loureiro. In his first letter, he wrote, "I have only eaten fruits. They are delicious. The hardest thing is to choose them, but instinct guides me" (Sousa, 1914a, p.277). Amílcar de Sousa also received news from Gameiro in July: "I have just erected a hut on Avenida Dr. Amílcar de Sousa, where we will take our meals and take the air, sun, and rain... Boim is mountainous and picturesque" (Craveiro, 1914, p.403-404).

Cândido Craveiro sent notes on his journey: He had left from Leixões on July 24 and had reached Pará on August 7, having stopped at Funchal. On August 1, he and the other passengers on board had been informed of the outbreak of the First World War. On August 12 he had taken a steamship to Boim. Before leaving, he had time to appreciate Belém, which he found agreeable, with trees lined with mango trees and better levels of hygiene than Porto. He also mentioned how hard he found it to sleep in the hammock he had acquired. On August 15 he reached Santarém, where Joaquim Pedro Gameiro awaited him (Craveiro, 1914, p.403-404).

Cândido Craveiro continued to send news, which was duly published in *O Vegetariano*. In a letter to Amilcar de Sousa dated October 1, 1914, illustrated with drawings, he wrote of the progress made in setting up the establishment and the kind of life he was leading. He was all but naked, wearing just some ragged pants, and said he was already living in a house with two rooms – a kind of hut made of wood and straw with a clay floor, built under the supervision of Ernesto Borges. The raw materials came from the forest and the house let in the sunlight, the wind, the rain, the birdsong, and other animals. It was furnished with a chest, which served as a chair, and a table, whose legs were made from freshly gathered branches. They slept in hammocks in partitions decorated with illustrated postcards, plaques painted by Cândido Craveiro himself, and a map of Brazil.

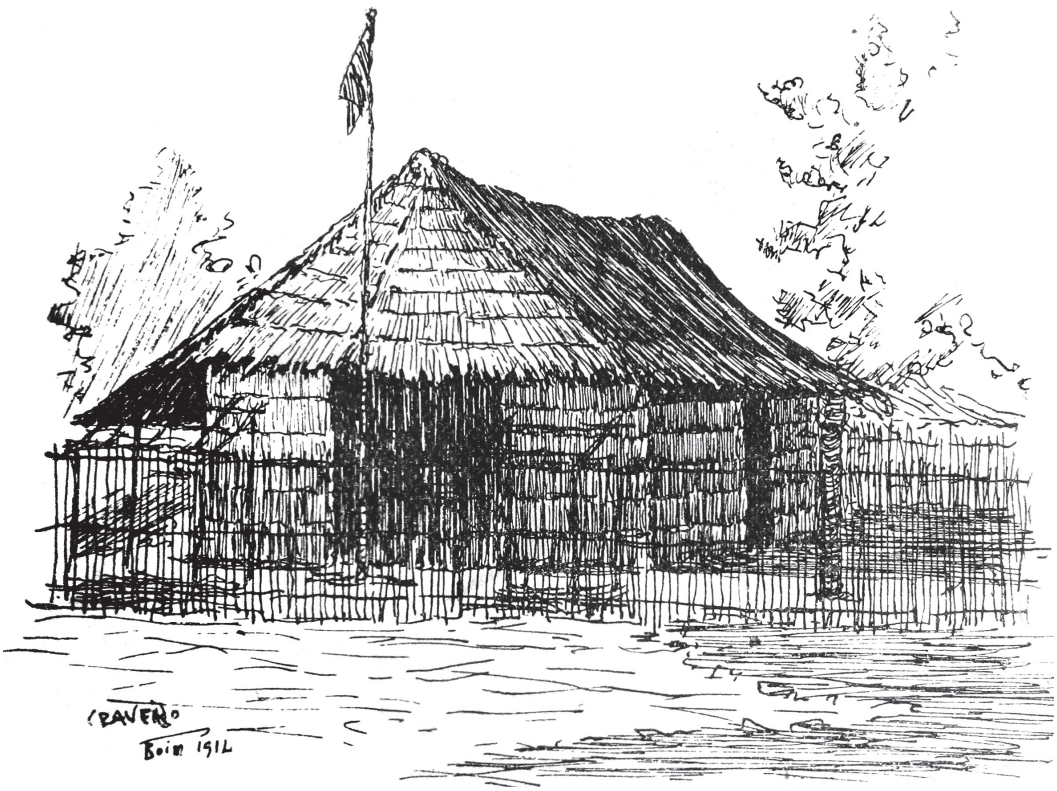

Figure1: Naturist house in Boim, drawn by Cândido Craveiro (Source: Craveiro, 1915a, p.149)

Having described his material conditions, he wrote about the nature of the land: a good climate, abandoned agriculture, except for manioc (cassava) and rubber tapping, and scant fruit, which Joaquim Pedro Gameiro was already trying to resolve by planting trees. Nonetheless, they had avocados, pineapples, apricots, acai berries, bananas, cashews, cashew nuts, coconuts, oranges, limes, mangos, papayas, and sapodillas, which seems inconsistent with the reference to a scarce supply, unless he was referring to European fruits. He also reported on some forest fires, and wrote that he would soon begin transplanting trees. He

described the landscape as "wild, harsh, savage, overgrown, contrasting extraordinarily with the sweet, poetic countryside of our land" (Craveiro, 1915a, p.150).

Cândido Craveiro was keen on bathing in the morning, "one of the most agreeable things we have here," as well as canoeing and taking walks. He stressed the importance of naturism, especially following Gameiro's example, who was already over 70 and had shed years by walking, climbing trees, and devoting himself to farming. He added that it would be worth considering exploiting saponin from berries – without indicating which plant they came from, possibly *Sapindus saponaria* –, because they supplied a "true naturist soap." Finally, he went over his favorite foods: waterleaf and gherkin salads and acai berries eaten pure or with flour (Craveiro, 1915a, p.152).

Figure 2: Boim beach, drawn by Cândido Craveiro (Source: Craveiro, 1915a, p.151)

The harshness of the living conditions and work led Craveiro to reflect on the adoption of naturism by some, whom he regarded as snobs, but concluded that if they were in Boim they would go back "to their homelands up to their eyes in naturism" (Craveiro, 1915a, p.153). He added that they were strong and healthy, but that they had experienced moments when they had lost heart and missed civilization:

> I was not born and raised in this. My life was different, and I have almost always lived in the midst of noise and bustle. And this here is so solitary! We live amongst a semi-savage population, far, very far, from the world, isolated. We must harmonize our way of life as best as possible with nature; but not go back to the wild. This environment seems to make us savages. As a refuge, I sometimes eagerly pick up one of the few books I brought, and just a few days ago I was surprised to read, with great interest, the 'Echoes of Society' section of a Lisbon newspaper, from four months ago, which came here as wrapping for some boots (Craveiro, 1915a, p.153).

The imminent end of this enterprise can be divined from this confession. Indeed, just a few months elapsed between October 1, 1914, when it was written, and May 1915, when Cândido Craveiro was already back in Pará (Brazil), referring to the failure of the project, the reasons for which he did not give. He then stressed the importance of the land for living as a frugivore, the relationship between heat and ease of engaging in naturist practices, and the limited use the locals made of these resources, preferring to eat meat and fish and drink alcohol. There, he took part in or gave sessions providing more information about naturism, declaring himself hopeful that "Pará will one day be a bulwark of naturism" (Craveiro, 1915b, p.40). It had all begun with Amílcar de Sousa's articles published in the *Folha do Norte* newspaper (Seixas, 2011; Fernandes, Seixas, 2011; Seixas, Carvalho, Massarani, 2013; Seixas et al., 2013), which, despite having been ridiculed by some, were beginning to bear fruit. He ended with an appeal to create a Naturist Center in Pará under the auspices of the Vegetarian Society of Portugal (Craveiro, 1915c, p.393-395).

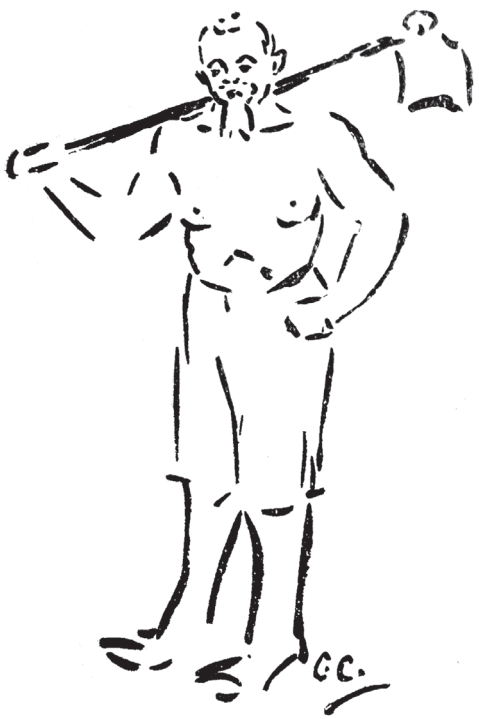

Figure 3: Caricature of Gameiro by Cândido Craveiro (Source: Craveiro, 1915a, p.150)

Figure 4: Caricature of Craveiro by Cândido Craveiro (Source: Craveiro, 1915a, p.150)

Ernesto Borges died in 1915, his death being attributed to "dietary errors incompatible with naturism." The news story went on to talk about the colony, which apparently continued, although under whom it was not said (Borges, 1915, p.286). In an undated letter to Amilcar de Sousa, Joaquim Pedro Gameiro (1915, p.357) confirmed this idea: "The colony has not broken up. It is always progressing, we will take it forward." But it did not

in fact succeed, which was a cause of disappointment amongst some Brazilian naturists (Colónias..., 1915, p.380-383).

Although Cândido Craveiro did eventually return to Portugal, he stayed on in Brazil for some time. In June he was in Rio de Janeiro, where, in a letter dated September 1915, he noted that naturism was virtually unheard of. Even so, he had not lost his will to spread the word about vegetarianism in Brazil (Craveiro, 1915c, p.393-395). At the end of the year, he complained of the heat and took joy from the appearance of different types of fruit. In his letter, he made sure he mentioned the most important thing:

> It appears that the heat has also had the gift of awakening the Brazilian Naturist Society from the profound lethargy in which it was immersed. The young Brazilian group has awakened, stretched, yawned, changed direction, and, from what I see, given up the *dolce fare niente* to which it had comfortably delivered itself (Craveiro, 1916a, p.75).

The Brazilian Naturist Society had planned a number of initiatives: lectures, advertisements, and the publication of a newspaper called *Vida Naturista* (Naturist Life). In August 1918, he was still in Rio. The latest news, which he sent to Amílcar de Sousa in a letter dated August 21, 1918, was that he had made contact with members of the naturopathic movement in the USA and had received books from them; he planned to learn iridology – a process by which several ailments could be diagnosed – and said he was completely frugivorous, spending just 45$00 a week, far less than he would if he were to eat at a vegetarian or mixed boarding house, where he would spend 100$00. Essentially, he was living a life of "new and interesting horizons" (Craveiro, 1918, p.356). His correspondent's reply was also published in *O Vegetariano*. In it, Amílcar de Sousa wrote that Joaquim Pedro Gameiro had regretted his giving up Boim and expressed his desire to visit Brazil after the war to set up a sanatorium (Sousa, 1918, p.357-358).

In 1921, Craveiro's contributions to *O Vegetariano* continued, with articles on "Fasting and fasters," "Naturist propaganda," and "Know how to eat." However, Jerónimo Caetano Ribeiro made clear that his radicalism reflected his own way of thinking, not that of the Vegetarian Society of Portugal (O Vegetariano, 1921b, p.249-250). Craveiro's opinions were clearly not agreeable to all. At the end of the year, he returned to Portugal on the steamship Porto. He settled in Ílhavo and continued to work for the magazine. As of volume 17, from 1926, in particular, he wrote several articles. The editors again explained that his doctrines were "unorthodox" but that there was room for different viewpoints (O Vegetariano, 1926, p.42).

If the Boim project had failed, there was another that was aborted even before it reached maturity. In August 1918, in a letter to Cândido Craveiro, Amílcar de Sousa announced that after the war he wished to go to Brazil to found the Paradise Sanatorium at a location "where there runs a stream of clear waters and banana trees grow" (Sousa, 1918, p.357-358). The project got off the ground, albeit partially, on January 16, 1920, when he went to Pará to found a Naturist Farming Colony. He left Portugal in Anselm, a ship run by the Booth Line (Liverpool) with a diplomatic passport. He had been entrusted by the Minister of the Interior, Colonel Ernesto de Sá Cardoso (29 jun. 1919 to 15 jan.

1920), to undertake a public health study mission, as was reported in an interview published in the newspaper *A Capital* shortly before he left the country (O Vegetariano, 1920b, p.76-79). He reached Guajará bay on January 28 (Sousa, 1920b, p.27-28). The ten-day voyage included much seasickness, a stop on Madeira island, and an eight-day quarantine period. He was accompanied by A. Pereira and J. Marques, about whom nothing is known (Sousa, 1920c, p.58-60). One participant of the sanatorium-colony project was an English philanthropist from Liverpool, one A. Watters, who had lived in Chile, England, and Madeira, and had invited him to pool their efforts to make the project a success (Sousa, 1920d, p.42-43).

On the eve of his voyage, Amílcar de Sousa was already full of praise for the country he would visit: "Brazil is now teaching Portugal, which discovered it, in matters of social and individual hygiene" (Sousa 1920e, p.76-79). But his arrival was far from auspicious: quarantine put him in a state of despair, such that he accused the health authorities of incompetence and wrote a letter of protest that he had sent to *Folha do Norte*. He took the opportunity to ask for a bunch of bananas so he could continue his frugivorous diet. Yet in the midst of these untoward circumstances, and without yet having set foot on dry land, he already proclaimed his wonderment at the prodigious Amazonian wildlife: "It has the indomitable force of energetic elements full of youth and creative power" (Sousa, 1920e, p.79).

His accounts continued after he had alighted, informing the readers of *O Vegetariano* of his expectations and disappointments, even after having praised the tropics as synonymous with paradise. In "For America: the alcohol king," written in April, Amílcar de Sousa praised the people's personal hygiene – bathing daily – and domestic hygiene – disinfection of homes – but was highly critical of their diets, which he regarded as inadequate, and the fact that alcohol was so prevalent (Sousa, 1920f, p.84-85). Elsewhere, he compared the situation in northern Brazil with the situation in Portugal, putting the post-war differences in perspective. While he highlighted the bounty of the land, he commented that virtually nobody cultivated it. In his view, the mirage of rubber was still in the air, with the excessive spending that had once been possible because of the high profits derived from its exploitation. At the same time, he remarked on the high price of foodstuffs. Nonetheless, in the comparison, Portugal still came out worse:

> At least there is no hunger here. There is not that constant restlessness that one sees in cities, especially enslaved to the thousand selfish deeds by those different tribes of red or blue politicians that lead Portugal to the most abject and dangerous moral, economic, and political ruin (Sousa, 1920g, p.104).

Lodged at the Iron palace (actually the Vítor Maria da Silva palace, also known as the Flat-Iron mansion, where there were figurative Art Nouveau tile panels by A. Arnoux e Boulanger & Cie.), on the Marco road, Sousa line, the physician continued to record his impressions of Pará – "a land where lizards, crabs, fetid fish and a lot of rotten meat is eaten," and where much coffee and *cachaça* was drunk – and to dream up projects, one of which was for children, who, after breastfeeding, should begin a raw-food diet, "growing up unharmed by the evil of cooking" (Sousa, 1920h, p.113).

Nonetheless, the differences of opinion between Amílcar de Sousa and A. Watters started to appear. In May, the readers of *O Vegetariano* learnt of the former's plans to found a colony on the outskirts of Belém. However, Watters wanted to have it built further inland. Apparently, he had changed his mind after reading a few pages of Sousa's work *O Naturismo,* in which he set forth the advantages – in terms of supply and trading in surpluses – of living outside cities, but near them. Amílcar de Sousa put his foot down: "I would not go with him to the brutal, wild interior" (Sousa, 1920h, p.112).

In June, the fate of the project seemed clear. Amílcar de Sousa published his personal diagnosis of A. Watters: "He is not energetic enough, nor does he have enough stamina to live very long, so much so that he has no teeth, he does not chew the fruits well, and especially the nuts of different kinds, the delicious monkey pots, and the flavorful coconut" (Sousa, 1920i, p.122). Equally or more importantly, there were some insoluble differences in the two men's plans and points of view. Amílcar de Sousa was not keen for the members of the colony he was going to found to be contemplative types who were only interested in eating fruits; he valued work and wanted to create "agricultural industry" alongside the colony. These ideas clashed directly with Watters's, who wanted to do away with labor, commerce, and industry – ultimately, any kind of economic relationship. Sousa's competitive spirit came to the fore: he regretted not having enough money to set up two colonies, one opposite the other, each named after its founder. That way, they would be able to find out who was right (Sousa, 1920i, p.122-123).

The project was quick to run its course, and in July the readers of *O Vegetariano* were notified of its failure. The two men had parted company: A. Watters had travelled to inland Pará, while Amílcar de Sousa had travelled southward to Rio de Janeiro. The reasons were sketched out: "Watters is a philosopher who wants to live amongst the indians in the heartland. I will not accompany this man of science into the wild. My aim was to found a sanatorium colony on the outskirts of Pará [Belém] to treat the sick and for people to live their life together or separately in tune with nature" (Sousa, 1920j, p.153).

By 1920, frugivorism had hardly taken off in Pará. Only a few years earlier, in 1912, *O Vegetariano* had reported that there were "many and valuable new memberships" of people from that region to the Portuguese Vegetarian Society (including a list of 16 persons), and adding that the movement was spearheaded by the Pará-born lawyer Alfredo Sousa. In the same piece, the benefits of naturism were exhorted, after noting that the Pará climate was draining and the region needed to change its eating habits: "[Pará] is in great need of the dietary reform we propose, because it will bring innumerous benefits of a physical, social, and moral, and even economic nature of which its children, and their guests, have absolute need to be able to win in the battle for life" (O Vegetariano, 1912, p.205).

Amílcar de Sousa had stopped giving news about A. Watters and had set off southward. He took the Pará steamship, run by Lloyd Brasileiro – a Brazilian company founded in 1894 – and in Rio he spent most of his time at the vegetarian boarding house, Pensão Vegetariana, on 120 Rua da Alfândega, which was run by Ana de Aguiar and served 200 to 300 meals a day. He met up with Cândido Craveiro soon after his arrival, and spent his first few days with him near Santa Luzia beach. He then moved to the house of another friend, Acácio de Lannes, where he chose to sleep on an army cot. Like any visitor to the

city, he was awestruck by its natural beauty and went on trips – or went sightseeing as we would call it now – on several occasions, visiting Sugar Loaf, Urca, the Atlantic Avenue (Avenida Atlântica)…

During his stay, he again noted the personal hygiene of the Brazilians, most of whom bathed daily, and their houses. He gave four lectures, one at the Association of Brazilian Agriculture, one in the hall of the *Jornal do Commercio* newspaper, another at the public library, and one at the Mourisco Pavilion (Pavilhão Mourisco) in the Botafogo district (Sousa, 1920l, p.169-173). News about these public events and interviews he gave was subsequently published in *O Vegetariano*. He returned to Portugal on the Almanzora in the same year of 1920.

Successes and failures of Portuguese naturism

Irrespective of individual dietary choices – omnivorism, vegetarianism, or veganism – naturism started to attract the attention of the Portuguese and be organized in the early twentieth century, especially due to Amílcar de Sousa, Manuel Teixeira Leal, Jerónimo Caetano Ribeiro and his wife, Julieta Rodrigues Ribeiro, Ângelo Jorge, Jaime de Magalhães Lima, and a few others. The most enthusiastic and outspoken advocate of the movement was Amílcar de Sousa: not only was he a practitioner of naturism and vegetarianism, adopting a frugivorous, raw-food diet, but he was a vegan *avant la lettre*, when the basis for this movement had not yet been established or the founding ideas conceptualized. And he went much further – giving lectures in Portugal, Spain and Brazil, and writing books and over a hundred articles published in the mainstream press and specialized publications – to spread the word about vegetarianism and naturism throughout Portuguese-speaking countries, especially Brazil, and also, through the translation of several of his works, in Spanish-speaking countries.

In his self-proclaimed mission to propagate a "green diet," Amílcar de Sousa regarded himself – and was regarded by others – as a missionary and an apostle. With a restless spirit and an activist's energy, he spoke out against what he believed were dietary ills and called for people to adopt naturism as the only path for the regeneration of man and, thus, society. In this sense, the return to nature, as opposed to degeneration and an artificial lifestyle full of the consumption of harmful and inebriating substances like alcohol, tobacco, and meat, was indispensable. But it was important to go further, combining this with light clothing, scrupulous personal hygiene, cleanliness of the home, physical exercise, and regular exposure to the sun and water. He therefore argued in favor of projects to regenerate the body and society, seeking to create beings whose values differed from the prevailing social reality. It was therefore a matter of finding a new discourse about the relationships between body and society through a system of values and behavioral rules. This is how his effort to create the naturist colonies can be understood.

In order to attain this level of regeneration and live according to the laws of nature, a naturist's life would be facilitated no end if they could live in regions with a warm climate, as this would enable them to base their diet on a variety of good-quality fruits that would be available in sufficient quantity all year round, do physical exercise in the open air,

bathe, take the sun, and wear light clothing. As such, several naturists from Portugal and elsewhere saw Brazil as a new Eden. The Portuguese plans to settle naturist colonies there selected the province of Pará, first in Boim, on the left-hand bank of the Tapajós river (now the district of Santarém), and later in the outskirts of Belém. Both proved unsuccessful, showing that these models of social organization, which purported to be superior to the prevailing models, would not work. They were concrete examples of utopia: societies that were ideal, fair, rational, perfect, and unattainable.

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