

PAULO MOURA  
(Texto) e MIGUEL  
MANSO (Fotografia)

**Tamera, the community of solar energy and free love, is a laboratory of the new social, economic, political, and love organization, as well as the starting point for the world revolution. But first you have to learn its language.**



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A barefoot woman approaches a tall young man with a braid. “I need to be hugged,” she says. The bell sounds for lunch. Three youths are telling the group of people gathered on the terrace how the couscous was cooked with cauliflower and lettuce salad. More people come to the large, open-air dining room. They help themselves before they sit at the long wooden tables. The barefoot woman thanks the young man: “You are such a good hugger!” The food, all cooked by sun, is delicious. The Tamerians relish it groaning with pleasure. It is a custom here. Chirping with happiness

goes with all the pleasurable moments, which are many. When they sit down, when they get up, when they drink tea, when they look around, the Tamerians go “yummy-yummy.” It is part of their common language, like saying, “it has good frequency” or “that is part of the morphogenetic field or “that has an enormous healing power.”

At a table with eight people, a green-eyed young woman makes confessions, addressing the young man opposite her, about her love life. She is not bothered that everybody else is hearing her. Suddenly, she stops and then says very loudly: “And if tomorrow he calls me and says: ‘You have to decide. Either Tamera or me!’ What shall I do?” The other guests look up, stare at the girl and would be more than willing to help did they know all the givens of the problem. She provides them. “I had broken up with him a few months ago, thinking it would be final, but yesterday he texted me and I was so happy! Just look at my plate. I didn’t even touch the food.” And she goes on, explaining how all of a sudden she realized that perhaps they could get back together again, even though he is in Estonia and she here, in Tamera, in the middle of Alentejo. The girl is a temporary visitor of the community, so nobody really knows her, but that doesn’t prevent the others from making suggestions and providing philosophical speeches bearing on the case, as they go on munching cauliflower and lettuce. “Yummy yummy.”

# 8

Portuguese live permanently in Tamera, a community of 150 people, most of them German

Transparency is one of the mantras of Tamera. Everything is shared and discussed in the community, from practical to intimate matters. “The problems disappear or become much lighter as soon as we share them,” says Isabel Rosa, 46, living in Tamera for two and half years. “We gradually learn how to empty ourselves of things. We gradually get rid of fear.” She worked on publicity, first in several companies, then as a freelancer. In search of a freer and more authentic life, she visited several communities in Europe where she exchanged labor for accommodation during a given period of time. She spent two weeks in Tamera during that phase. She came back later to stay.

She is one of the 8 Portuguese people among the near 150 permanent inhabitants of Tamera (almost 90% of which are German). She was looking for an alternative form of life and found it. To a certain extent, it is possible, in a western country, not to be subjected to the laws of the market, to competition, to the dominant lie and injustice, to exploitation and to war. Not to be neither an accomplice nor a victim, not to act against Nature, humanity and one’s conscience. It is possible to live outside the system. Isabel feels good, she feels “healed.” At first, she paid the monthly 15 euros required of all “neophytes” to pay for food

and accommodation. Later, she became a regular collaborator. She works in administration, helping in relations with the Portuguese. She doesn't pay anything but she doesn't earn anything either (just a symbolic pocket money). In Tamera, she has no need of buying things. She has a bed, food, friends, a full life, and the feeling of participating in an important experience, one that will determine the future of human beings on the planet.



The tasks are shared by the community, from “day cooks” to volunteers to do the dishes

It is a spare life that many would consider primitive, but for her and all the other Tamerians it is rather a more advanced, superior, and irreversible stage. They find themselves in the new morphonogenic field. The ignorant questions the archaic reporter goes on asking she answers with a condescending smile: “We do not speak like that anymore. We no longer use that kind of language.” The bell sounds again for the day cooks to make the end-of-the meal request: “Hello lovely people! We need six volunteers to do the dishes. There is a gorgeous cake for dessert but we have the honor and the duty to inform you that it won’t be served until we have the six volunteers.”

## **A Model for the World**

Tamera is a community of alternative life consisting mainly of German citizens, located in the municipality of Odemira, in Alentejo. It occupies, since 1995, an estate of 336 acres named Monte do Cerro and describes itself as a large eco-village on its way to self-sustainability as regards energy and food, a lab of solar energy, permaculture, and new forms of human relationships, including communal sharing and free love. It defines itself as The International Center of Research for Peace, A Model to the Future, and Paradise-to-Be. It is organized according to areas of given functions, as in a city, or rather, in a nation. Vehicles scatter clouds of dust in the dirt roads that link the Cidade do Sol (city of the sun), the Aldeia da Luz (the village of light), the water retention

landscapes, the Space of Art, the Political Ashram, and, in the highest and most central space, the monument that is the spiritual and symbolic retreat designated as Círculo de Pedras (stone circle).

Ten years ago, Monte do Cerro was arid land on its way to desertification, as is the case of many regions in Alentejo. Today, it is green and fertile, dappled by lakes that seem natural and sprinkle freshness all over. It produces most of the foodstuffs it consumes and has potential for much more, according to the experts that do research and work here.

Such is Tamera's great example. The amazing experience that turns this space a model. "Let's stop here. Just feel the freshness!" says one of the guests of Bernd Muller, the principal coordinator of Tamera's ecology. The party of visitors, all affiliated with agricultural projects in India, is toured along the lakes to learn the techniques being used. Bernd, a 52 year-old German man with dazzling blue eyes, explains with both accuracy and enthusiasm how the water cycles work, how man's actions have thwarted those cycles thus hindering soil permeability and leading on to desertification and impoverishment in many regions of the world. He further explains how Tamera has respected the water, giving back to it space and freedom, so that it may reciprocate in wealth and healing power.

"We must not thwart what the water wants. The water

traces the shape of these lakes and the winding canals that allow it to live.” Bernd Muller

It is as if these lakes, surrounded by green patches, have always been here. Not so. The soil was dry, in spite of heavy rains in the winter. The water would escape to other soils, flowing down the slopes, and turning the valley into a dry region, in spite of the floods in winter. “This land was productive only four months a year,” says Muller. “That’s why almost everything had to be imported. Thus, the place was being abandoned, like so many other places in this and other Southern European regions.”

In 2009, the great work was accomplished. It is hard to imagine the pandemonium it must have been. These peaceful lovers of Nature brought in diggers, cranes, and trucks, and didn’t leave any stone upturned. They dug deep ditches and build dikes and hill patches. Bernd Muller explains everything with clockmaker’s precision. Once the hole was dug, the 5 meter high dike was built and rendered impermeable, with the clay and stones from the first layers, at more than 3,5 meter deep. At the top, the soil was put back on and then the vegetation. The same technique was used for the hill patches, which were built in conformity with the slope, to allow the water to flow into the lake and be contained there by the dike, at the same time that it would soak the adjacent soil, rendering it damp and fertile. “The

water never jumps the dike, it finds its own way,” Bernd describes rather poetically. “We must not thwart what the water wants, what it likes. The water alone traces the shape of these lakes and the winding canals that allow it to live.”

The landscape was totally changed by the creation of more than a dozen lakes (we mustn’t speak of “lakes,” rather of water retention reservoirs, since the rules of the European Union would not allow for the creation of artificial lakes), but the landscape was built according to its processes, with its own layers of clay, rocks, and fertile soil. The water remains in these pools all the year round, allowing for trees and other plants to grow without any need for irrigation.

The work was inspired by the Austrian visionary Sepp Holzer, one of the inventors of the concept of permaculture, which advocates the creation of sustainable agricultural and communitarian systems. But there are also other theoretical influences, such as that of the Australian Davis Holmgren, who developed the theory of sustainable systems, or that of Victor Shaver, an Austrian farmer who conceived of irrigation techniques based on the idea that water is a living being. Actually, Bernd repeats frequently and enthusiastically that water is a living being, it likes some ways of life, gets annoyed if we hinder its movements, showing its displeasure by provoking floods or stagnating if



forced to stay put. “The water has its desires. If we respect them, if you grant water liberty, it will respond with such vigor and wealth that humanity will no longer experience scarcity.” The words of his conclusion, if stripped of their poetic fervor, might well let scientific rigor go down the drain.

The amount of annual precipitation in Tamera, according to Bernd, is similar to that in Berlin. “The problem is not water scarcity.” There is, therefore, no reason for one region to be more prosperous than another. “Portugal has enough resources to be the richest country of Europe. And yet, it imports 80% of what it consumes,” he adds, possibly alluding to the proverbial, intrinsic incapacity of the Portuguese, were we to use a reactionary and obsolete language logic. According to Tamera, what this means is that the techniques being used here can turn a desert into a fertile land and bail out of poverty millions of human beings.

## **A Solar University**

The most obvious wealth of Alentejo is the sun. Alentejo has the largest solar exposition in Europe. Jurgen Kleinwachter is a seventy-year old scientist whose dream is to make the world move by solar energy. In Germany, he and his father, Hans, created a research center on astronautics and nuclear energy whose inventions were later used in nuclear war

industry. From the 1980s on, they decided to engage in science only for pacifist ends and the creation of a central of solar energy. “Every day the sun produces 15 times more energy than what humanity needs,” says Jurgen, as he sits, his cowboy hat on, at one of the tables at the open-air Praça do Campo Experimental (experimental field square). He explains that the sun is the origin of everything, even of the coal and oil used in primitive phases of evolution. If you use solar energy directly, there is less squandering, nothing is wasted.

Jurgen lives in Germany and his company sells solar panels for heating the water of swimming pools and other similarly non-altruistic purposes. But in 2001 he set up his research center in Tamera, arguing that it “progresses here more rapidly than if it were linked to a university,” since what is invented is experimented and applied right away, and exported to other places if necessary. Protocols with several universities allow for training workshops and circulation of researchers. “What we are creating in Tamera is a Solar University,” says Jurgen. Some of his collaborators work on a small mirror with a special shape, based on informatics, which permits to reach a temperature of 1500 degrees Celsius.

But many of the devices created or developed by Jurgen have daily practical application in Tamera. In the summer, the kitchens use a solar oven. Paul Gisler, director of the solar research group of Tamera,

shows the simplicity of the oven's functioning. A huge parabolic mirror follows the movements of the sun with the help of a pendulum clock made of pieces of an old bike. The mirror concentrates the rays of light on the open door of the oven, and you have a big pot of water boiling in two minutes. When Paul brings a piece of wood to the point of concentration of the solar rays, it instantly goes up in flames.

Other mirrors, resorting to Stirling motors, which use thermic differences to move a piston, are linked to water pumps or sources of electricity. The system used in the greenhouse is more sophisticated. A lens in the shape of a strip along the transparent walls makes the light strike a tube through which vegetable oil runs. Such hot oil is also used in engines, or to cook at night, or when there is no direct sunlight. Stoves can also use biogas, taken from reservoirs of organic waste, such as leftover foodstuffs and human feces. Fermentation releases the gas that is channeled to stoves, as well as a stinking fluid that is used as fertilizer. This is all done without recourse to external electricity or petrol. Just human genius operating with micro-organisms on the decomposition of matter. According to Jurgen, it is a true multinational project. Perhaps, in his Tamerian language, it ends up being politically correct: This is a collaboration between German and British scientists and Portuguese bacteria.”



Refeições partilhadas na comunidade que ocupa uma herdade com 136 hectares em Odemira









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# Love and Sex Debated in Community

Tamera wants to be a model for the world. It is not just a space where one can live an alternative way of



life. It is a laboratory where a new way of living in society is being experimented. The experiment can be shown as an example and proof that it is possible, and ready to be imitated anywhere and spread throughout the world. Food self-sufficiency by recourse to permaculture, the right management of water, and energy independence by means of solar light – such are the solutions that Tamera proposes for the planetary crisis.

But that is not enough. The revolution the world needs will not be accomplished simply by changing the social and economic structures. We have to deal with intimate structures as well. The roots of violence, of the possession and conquest drives that lead to oppression and war, are in the human mind. If we do not destroy that in ourselves, there is no point in building perfect societies, because they are condemned to failure. Consciousness of this is Tamera's major political and philosophical tribute. So, in this department also, it is necessary to make experiments. Along experiments with solar energy and rain water retention, free love is practiced in Tamera. There is an alternative paradigm for relationships among people: love and sexual exclusivity is not an absolute value, possession is not tolerated, jealousy is fought. This implies a change in the private sphere that is achieved by eliminating the private sphere. Transparency and sharing are encouraged. Matters of love and sex are debated in the community. In small, congenial groups, but also in the

Plenary Meeting, that gathers together every day, as well as in the Forum, that meets once a week to discuss the most important matters.

Before the whole community, in the tent of Tamera Class, all issues concerning organization, leadership, finances, linkages to the outside world, courses and seminars running throughout the summer. But, also, intimate issues of any one's private life, as, for example, a relationship one of the members has with someone, and of what kind. A member may inform the community that he/she has an exclusive relationship with someone else, or, on the contrary, that he/she is open to sex and love exchanges. Or advice may be asked about how to conquer jealousy in a given situation.

Here is Martin Winiecki, 24, coordinator of Escola Terra Nova (new earth school), a project that aims to create the philosophical basis for the construction of the society of the future: "Our thinking is based on three main names," he says. "Karl Marx, and his idea to change the world; Sigmund Freud, and his study of the human interior; and Wilhelm Reich, and the importance given to sexuality." The ideological grounding of the new revolution is in these three philosophers. From them the Tamera thinkers have distilled a theoretical and operative synthesis. "Every revolution needs a theory," says Martin. "But we do not yet have a well-defined, complete knowledge. We have created platforms of consciousness in which we

accept various contributions. The trick is to bring into a whole strands that seemed contradictory. For example, we invited Latin American shamans to bring together tribal and scientific and technological knowledge.” Change will come in a different way from all the past revolutions. There will be no attempt to overturn governments or to fight armies. “The idea,” Martin begins to explain, “is to create healing biotypes. The world is one, holistic and based on information. Evolutions occur by leaps, fields of information.”

This time the theory belongs to the English biologist Rupert Sheldrake, who created the hypothesis of morphogenetic fields and morphic resonance. One of the theory’s classical examples is the following: monkeys on a certain archipelago in the Pacific fed on potatoes. One day, one of the monkeys washed the potato before eating it and concluded that it tasted better that way. The other monkeys saw how pleased he was and decided to do the same. By the time the one hundredth’s monkey washed its potato, the monkeys of other islands, with which they had no contact whatsoever, adopted the same procedure. According to Sheldrake, there is an invisible organizing field that turns a repetitive phenomenon or behavior into a rule for the whole universe, at least among the members of the same species.

## **Peace Stations Spread**

# throughout the World

Social change will occur like this, a phenomenon of morphic resonance, to a certain extent similar to Karl Jung's collective consciousness. It is necessary to create biotypes to make the new paradigm work. Once such biotypes, like Tamera, multiply in sufficient numbers, the rest of human society will see itself as anachronistic and absurd, and convert to the new paradigm.

With this objective in mind, Tamera develops several ways of showing itself to the world. Foreign delegations are welcome, a new knowledge exchange program, designated as Campus Global, was created, as well as a foundation entitled Grace. Tamera members visit critical points of the planet, such as Palestine or Colombia, to try and help solve problems and conflicts. Similar communities and station of peace are being created worldwide.

Tamera, this farm between the villages of Relíquias and Colo, however, is the healing biotype (Cura I). The new world is supposed to start in this experience, on the basis of its founding father, the sociologist and psychoanalyst Dieter Duhm (72). He was a leader of the student movement in Germany in 1968, but soon became disenchanted with his left Marxist comrades. He felt that they wanted to change the world but refused to change themselves. Dieter went on to concentrate on the liberation of the individual, before

social emancipation. He wrote a classic: *Fear in Capitalism* (1973), about the structures of oppression rooted in each one of us.

In 1978, Dieter Duhm, together with the theologian Sabine Lichtenfelds and the physicist Charly Rainer Ehrenpreis, created a community in the Dark Forest, Germany, based on “free love,” “spiritual ecology,” and “resonance technique.” The root of all social evils, they believed, is in the fear and hatred we have inside us, which manifests itself in violence in love and sexual relations.

Irma Knittel, 70, is today one of the inhabitants of the Aldeia da Luz (the light village), a sustainable architectural project based on clay and straw. She was a radical militant that eventually converted to Duhm’s ideology. “I was full of hatred, I wanted to destroy everything, but then I realized that we were failing, that we would never be able to change the world,” says she, who once sympathized with the Baader-Meinhoff terrorists. Based on the new love paradigm, Dieter, Sabine, and Charly created several communities in Germany, until they were targeted by a lot of criticism from the Catholic Church, but also from leftist movements.



Sabine Lichtenfelds sitting on one of the stones of the monument she had built inspired by the Cromleques de Almendres (Almendres Cromlech)

“The leftists thought that Dieter had become obsessed with spirituality and free love, and was no longer fighting against social injustice and capitalism,” explains Monika Alleweldt, 60, the editor of Verlag Meiga, publisher of the Tamera books. “We began to be considered a cult group. The media had a decisive role in this, and that is why we had to leave Germany.” Dieter and Sabine traveled all over the world looking for a new place. They have been together all along,

even though both have had love affairs. “When I arrived here, I knew this was the right place,” says Sabine, 59, sitting on one of the stones of the monument she had built inspired by the Cromeleque dos Almendres (Almendres Cromelch) in the municipality of Évora. “We were looking for a place that we could construct from scratch.” The estate Monte Cerro was for sale and the owner was in a hurry. Due to the draught and the soil’s lack of productivity, he had run into debt. A shepherd had once told Sabine, “there used to be lots of water here.” Decisions had to be taken quickly. In 1995, the Tamera community was born. According to Sabine, its name was related to local, female primitive spirituality. “Tamera’s objective is to change the world, to build a new ground. We have proven that it is possible to make the soil fertile, but now we have to show that the new forms of love relationship are the solution. The leftists accomplished nothing for the 1960s free-love slogan was not serious,” says Sabine. She studied the Bible, discussed utopian socialists like Charles Fourier with Dieter, and now is in charge of the project Escola do Amor Global (school of global love). “Things must change inside out. We want to bring here young people on the left, for them to understand. They cry for change but they have no alternatives. And we can show them an alternative,” says Sabine.

## **Tamera’s Government**

Dieter and Sabine are the moral authority in Tamera, but not its government. They are part of the Council of Vision, which meets every day with the Councils of Planning, Technology, Economy, Politics, Women, and so on and so forth. Each one of these councils is constituted by three elements, but there are no elections in any of them. The same is true of the three elements of Government, responsible for executive decisions. Benjamin von Mendelssohn, 41, is the head of Government. He rides his bike to the interview. “Yes, we call it ‘Government’, but there is a smile about the word ‘Government’,” he explains. The structure was created two years ago because the plenary decided it was necessary. Benjamin was the only one willing to take the job. “Here, since power does not entail money or privileges, nobody craves it,” we had heard from Martin. Somewhat like the communist axiom that in a classless society parties make no sense, which would be an inadequate language to the new morphogenetic field. There are no parties in Tamera either, even though it is permitted to disagree with the decisions of the Government. The Government announces its measures in the Plenary and those who disagree or think they have a better idea raise their arm. “Decisions go ahead only when there is consensus. If I feel that there are doubts, I bring the question again to the next Forum,” says Benjamin. The “opposition” thus depends on what the leader “feels.” And it works, because everything happens on the basis of trust.



When, for example, the great lake construction was decided, most people in the community did not agree, explained Martin. But, Benjamin explained, they did not try to oppose the decision because they trusted the enlightened leaders. And later they were convinced. Or else they had no way of countering, would say anyone not in command of the new language.

Theoretically, it is possible to form parties, or pressure groups, to defend certain positions, says the head of the Government. In practice, it does not happen because the consensuses and unanimity emerge naturally in the conviviality of the community. Since everybody wants the same thing, they all have the same opinions. Benjamin: "It is an illusion to think that people think autonomously." Such is the outcome of Duhm's theory.

People have violence inside them, hatred and dissent, as a result of their life traumas and the history of their society. That is why they have conflicts with each other. Because they are thus conditioned. "They have to be liberated, deconditioned," says Benjamin. "That is what we do here." It makes sense, if you are inside the language. The other members of the government are Robert Gasse, the musical director of Tamera, and Vera Kleinhammes, 30, Benjamin's partner. She is also, by coincidence, the daughter of Sabine and Dieter. Nepotism? Monarchy? Words of the old

language. Vera, who runs the project Campus Global, has traveled all over the world, from Mexico to Kenya, but she concentrates mainly in organizing a network of “stations” in Alentejo. Vera Kleinhammes: “I organized the various groups in the region, taking off from this thought: who would we have to get to know to render the region autonomous and independent very quickly, if all of sudden we were faced with the collapse of the political and economic system?”

Vera was born in the community. For her, alternative energies are quite natural. What about the love model, has she internalized it as well? “I still fight against jealousy. It is not easy. He has had other women but I have to accept. No wonder, being such a fascinating man, other women fall in love with him. But I am not afraid of losing him, we have been through so much together. And the fact that we do not hide anything gives security.”

Naila von Mendelssohn, 17, is Benjamin’s daughter (not Vera’s). Naila and Maria Kessler (same age) fell in love four times with the same men. They were never estranged because of that. They brought the matter to the Plenary, and they accepted. “We both followed our truth,” says Naila. “The fact that she had a certain intimacy with him does not devalue my intimacy with him.” Maria adds: “I realized there was no reason for me to be angry with her, or to be jealous. And that it was all right for me to continue to follow my drives vis-à-vis that men.”

Naila, Maria, and Jan Regelansen, 18, never went to school. They studied in Tamera and now they don't want to go to college. They can't conceive of themselves living outside the community. Naila wants to be a film director and plans to learn through the Internet. She can't remember any director she admires, but she knows what she wants to do: "I live in such a different world! If only I could find a tool to show it..." In improper language, one might say that she dreams of producing movies of regime propaganda. Jan says she holds a German passport but her nationality is Tamera.