

## ARTICLES

# THE WORKS OF ALFRED AGACHE IN PETRÓPOLIS (RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL) DURING THE ESTADO NOVO [NEW STATE] IN BRAZIL (1937-1945)

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### Abstract

*This article seeks to shed light on the underexplored visit of the French urban planner Alfred Agache to the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro in the early 1940s, with particular emphasis on his work in Petrópolis. It further aims to advance an understanding of how tourism emerged as a central theme in Agache's proposals during this period. To achieve this objective, the study examines talks he gave on the subject, based on the proposals that he and his team—including figures such as Abelardo Coimbra Bueno—developed for the urbanization of the city of Petrópolis. The research was grounded on documentary sources produced between 1937 and 1945. Lastly, the study analyzes the ideas proposed by the urban planners, comparing them with the interventions actually implemented over the following years, when tourism came to play a decisive role in shaping the city.*

### Keywords

*Urban Planning; History of the City; Urbanization; Tourism; Alfred Agache; Petrópolis; New State.*

## ARTIGOS

# “PETRÓPOLIS VAI ‘AGACHAR-SE’”: A PASSAGEM DE ALFRED AGACHE POR PETRÓPOLIS (RJ) DURANTE O ESTADO NOVO NO BRASIL (1937-1945)

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### Resumo

*O presente artigo pretende elucidar a pouco estudada passagem do urbanista Alfred Agache pelo interior fluminense no início da década de 1940, com especial destaque para seus trabalhos em Petrópolis (RJ). Além disso, espera-se propiciar a compreensão de como o tema Turismo aparece nas proposições de Agache no período. Para tanto, examinaram-se os discursos proferidos pelo urbanista francês sobre o tema com base nas proposições que ele e sua equipe, formada também por outros urbanistas, como Abelardo Coimbra Bueno, elaboraram para a urbanização da cidade mencionada. Tal levantamento foi realizado por meio de pesquisa documental em fontes produzidas no período delimitado (1937-1945). Por fim, realizou-se uma análise das ideias propostas pelos urbanistas, confrontando-as com as intervenções que se concretizaram anos depois, em que sobressai a atividade turística como determinante na cidade nos anos posteriores.*

### Palavras-chave

*Planejamento Urbano; História da Cidade; Urbanização; Turismo; Alfred Agache; Petrópolis; Estado Novo.*

# THE WORKS OF ALFRED AGACHE IN PETRÓPOLIS (RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL) DURING THE ESTADO NOVO [NEW STATE] IN BRAZIL (1937-1945)<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

Alfred Hubert Donat Agache<sup>2</sup> was active as an author, consultant, and collaborator on numerous urban planning projects across several countries. In France, he was responsible for drawing up plans in cities such as Paris, Dunkirk, Tours, Dieppe, Orléans, and Reims. Internationally, he developed plans for Canberra (Australia), Guayaquil (Ecuador), Lisbon and the Costa do Sol region (Portugal), Casablanca (Morocco), and Istanbul and Ankara (Turkey). A full professor at the Collège libre des sciences sociales in Paris, Agache also served as the founder and secretary-general of the French Society of Urban Planners (SFU).

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1. Expression taken from the article “Petrópolis e o Plano Agache [Petrópolis and the Agache Plan]”. *Pequena Ilustração*, Petrópolis, Year XI, No. 547, p. 5, March 8, 1942. This expression, used in the title of the Portuguese version of this article plays on the homophony between Agache’s surname and the Portuguese verb agachar (“to crouch” or “to squat”), reflecting both a linguistic pun and the perception of Petrópolis’ urban adaptation under his proposals during the period.

2. The brief biography of Alfred Agache presented here is based on a compilation of information from a number of different sources, including Bertoni (2024); Marat-Mendes, André, and Rodrigues (2012); Azevedo and Costa (2013); Silva (1996); and Coimbra Bueno (1941b), as well as additional details contained in the entry “AGACHE, Alfred Hubert Donat” in the “Authors” section of the Urbanismobr research network website. BERTONI, A. L’Étude des trajectoires professionnelles, une contribution à l’histoire de l’urbanisme. Le cas d’Étienne de Groër (1882-1952). *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez [en ligne]*, Madrid, 54-1, 2024. MARAT-MENDES, T.; ANDRÉ, P.; RODRIGUES, P. S. Alfred-Donat Agache urban proposal for Costa do Sol. From the territory to the city. In: INTERNATIONAL PLANNING HISTORY SOCIETY CONFERENCE, 15., 2012. *Proceedings [...]*, São Paulo: IPHS, 2012. Tema: Cities, nations and regions in planning history. SILVA, L. A trajetória de Alfred Donat Agache no Brasil. In: RIBEIRO, L. C. Q.; PECHMAN, R. (org.). *Cidade, Povo e Nação: gênese do urbanismo moderno*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1996. p. 397-410. AGACHE, Alfred Hubert Donat. In: URBANISMOBR. Available at: <https://urbanismobr.com.br/banco-documental/?string=agache&table=todos&type=todas&Submit=>. Accessed on: July 4, 2024.

In Brazil, Agache became particularly prominent for coordinating the development of an urban plan for the then-federal capital, Rio de Janeiro, known as the “Agache Plan” (Agache, 1927). However, another aspect of his biography that has received little attention is his return to Brazil at the end of the 1930s, when he established residence in Rio de Janeiro, remaining there until his death in 1959. Although some of Agache’s work from this period has been well documented—such as the urbanization plan for Curitiba (Molina, 2020; Rego; Ribeiro; Taub, 2015; Carmo, 2012) and various projects for cities including São Paulo, Vitória, Porto Alegre, and Recife (Azevedo; Costa, 2013)—significant gaps persist in our understanding of his trajectory in Brazil, particularly after the 1940s, including his work in the state of Rio de Janeiro during the early years of that decade.

This article therefore seeks to shed light on the rarely-studied visit of Alfred Agache to the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro in the early 1940s, with particular emphasis on the work carried out in Petrópolis. Furthermore, it also aims to understand how the theme of tourism appears in his proposals during this period. To achieve this objective, the study has examined both the talks he gave related to this subject, and the proposals he and his team developed regarding the urbanization of the city of Petrópolis. Lastly, an analysis was carried out of the potential interventions proposed by Agache that eventually came to be implemented in the city over the coming years.

The methodology employed in this study is both descriptive and analytical. Data were collected through documentary research of sources produced during the defined period (1937–1945), including proposals submitted as official requests to the Municipal Government of Petrópolis, widely circulated newspapers, relevant legislation and public acts, as well as images and other miscellaneous publications. Archival research conducted in libraries, public archives, and specialized research centers yielded a substantial body of documents, catalogues, photographs, images, reports, and sketches that suggested the preparation of an urbanization plan for Petrópolis. However, no final document appears to have systematized the plan or formally confirmed its existence. Consequently, the sources that most explicitly present these proposals are the interviews given by the urban planners in widely circulated periodicals of the time. These sources are given particular emphasis in the analysis, together with the aforementioned requests submitted to the Municipal Government of Petrópolis.

Nonetheless, it may be asserted that, particularly between 1941 and 1942, a consolidated set of guidelines for the urbanization of Petrópolis was developed and publicized, and to a considerable extent, subsequently implemented in interventions over the following decades. The investigation has been structured

into three sections: (i) a chronological account of events and the corresponding documents; (ii) the presentation and analysis of the proposals that were developed; and (iii) the presentation and analysis of the interventions that were subsequently implemented, juxtaposed with the originally proposed plans.

## 2. The institutionalization of urban and regional planning from the 1930s

The period following 1930 is characterized by state intervention across various sectors of the economy and social life, which gradually intensified and ultimately consolidated with the onset of the *Estado Novo* [New State]. Regarding the scenario triggered by the 1930 Revolution, Ianni (2009) demonstrated that, irrespective of its original intent, it gave rise to bourgeois institutions, values, and social norms, with state intervention in the economy and the regulation of labor relations as central elements. This period witnessed significant industrial growth and the consolidation of both an urban bourgeoisie and proletariat, culminating in the emergence of a more advanced form of capitalism in Brazil. It was also marked by the transformation of cities, driven by an accelerated process of urbanization resulting from socioeconomic factors—such as the aforementioned industrialization, improved living conditions, and consequent rural-to-urban migration—as well as from the interventionist role of the state through public policies and the reorganization of administration along rationalist lines.

It is within this context that the initial steps were taken toward the institutionalization of urbanism and urban planning as state policies, materialized through laws, plans, commissions, and an entire bureaucratic apparatus dedicated to this purpose. It should be noted that the period under study is also marked by the emergence of urbanism as a professional and academic field, highlighted by several significant events. Among these is Lúcio Costa's brief tenure as director of the *Escola Nacional de Belas Artes* (Enba) between 1930 and 1931, during which he proposed the creation of courses in Urbanism and Landscape Architecture at the institution (Cordeiro, 2012); the establishment of the Regional Council of Engineering, Architecture, and Agronomy (Crea) and the regulation of both professions in 1934; as well as the consolidation of a series of institutions, professional associations, events, and specialized publications at that time. Importantly, key urban planners—and the specialized offices responsible for developing urban plans—emerged as central actors in both the practices and debates surrounding urbanism and urban planning in Brazil. Notable examples include Atilio Correia Lima; the brothers Abelardo and Jerônimo Coimbra Bueno; Saboia Ribeiro; Nestor de Figueiredo; José de Oliveira Reis; Saturnino de Brito Filho; Armando de Godoy; and Francisco Baptista de Oliveira.

### 3. Alfred Agache in Petrópolis at the start of the 1940s

In January 1941, various newspapers reported that the then-mayor of Petrópolis, Mário Aloísio Cardoso de Miranda, had invited the French urban planner Alfred Agache to develop an urbanization plan for the municipality. Although the press emphasized Agache's role, it is important to note that the French urban planner was operating in Brazil as a technical consultant for the engineering firm Coimbra Bueno & Cia. Ltda., owned by the brothers Jerônimo and Abelardo Coimbra Bueno. The latter, in fact, accompanied Agache in his work, negotiations, interviews, and conferences. It is evident that Mayor Cardoso de Miranda's invitation extended to the Coimbra Bueno office, which had been contracted by the state government to develop plans for several municipalities in the state of Rio de Janeiro during the same period (Azevedo, 2012). It should also be noted that, a few months earlier, Cardoso de Miranda had served as Secretary of the Interior and Justice of the state government. The newspaper *Correio da Manhã* reported the following news item:

Petrópolis, 23 (National News Agency) – Professor Agache, a French urban planning expert invited by Mayor Cardoso de Miranda to draw up the city's urban development plan, visited Petrópolis for this purpose, conducting a detailed survey of its main sites in the company of his collaborator, engineer Guilherme Eppinghauss<sup>3</sup>. Speaking to the local press, the urban planner remarked that, throughout his career, he had never encountered a city with such promising potential for a comprehensive project of remodeling and urban development. He further observed that, in this respect, Petrópolis was unique in his experience, and that, once urbanized and remodeled, it could rank among the most beautiful cities in Brazil, and perhaps even in the world. (Urbanização [...], 1941, p. 5)<sup>4</sup>

The newspaper *O Globo*, when reporting on this event, further added:

After touring the city in the company of Mr. Eppinghauss, Director of Municipal Engineering, Professor Agache expressed a generally favorable impression of what he had observed. He requested that city maps, together with documents on the founding of Petrópolis and its subsequent development, be made available to him, so that he might take local traditions into account in his work. The French urban planner showed particular interest in examining the valleys and other topographic features, with a view to addressing the issue of the city's access routes—one from Rio de Janeiro and another

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3. At the time, engineer Guilherme Pedro Eppinghauss was Director of the Department of Engineering of the Municipal Government of Petrópolis, appointed by Decree No. 30 of April 2, 1940.

4. This and all other non-English citations hereafter have been translated by the author.

from the interior—as well as questions concerning circulation. Once in possession of the requested materials, Professor Agache would then return to spend several days in further study. [...] [Agache:] “[...] the city presents significant problems to be solved, above all those arising from its highly distinctive topography”. The professor was accompanied on this visit by engineer Abelardo Coimbra Bueno, one of his collaborators. (Remodelação [...], 1941, p. 2.)

Alfred Agache’s visit to Petrópolis likely stemmed from the initial negotiations and understandings between the local government and the team responsible for the future urban plan, as well as from preliminary assessments conducted at the time. On February 20, less than a month after the publication of the aforementioned news item, a request was filed with the Municipal Government entitled “Proposal for the Preparation of the Urbanization Plan of the City of Petrópolis, Submitted to Mayor Dr. Mario Cardoso Miranda” (Coimbra Bueno Ltda., 1941b). This preliminary project, drafted by the office of Coimbra Bueno & Cia. Ltda., aimed to prepare an Urbanization Plan for Petrópolis. The first section of the document provided a descriptive account of the team involved, detailing the work carried out both by the office and its consultant, Alfred Agache. The document explicitly clarified that Agache served as a consultant to the firm, and not the other way around, as suggested by the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* (Urbanização [...], 1941, p. 4), which portrayed Abelardo Coimbra Bueno as one of Agache’s “collaborators”.

The second part of the document contained a proposal for preparing the city’s urbanization plan. It included some preliminary assessments, outlined the main lines of development, specified the services to be provided by the office, identified the data to be supplied by the Municipal Government, and proposed a budget for the services. In addition, a letter signed by Agache requested that Mayor Cardoso de Miranda provide a range of data and documents to support the preparation of the plan. An accompanying memorandum indicated that the local administration initially rejected the proposal for two reasons: (i) the proposed cost of 965:000\$000 (nine hundred and sixty-five *contos de réis*, a historical Brazilian currency) exceeded the municipality’s available budget; and (ii) approving this amount, which was above the legal threshold for exemption from public bidding, would have required the initiation of a public tender. The memorandum reads as follows:

[...] State Decree-Law No. 10 of September 12, 1939, stipulated that all municipal public works and services with a value exceeding 100 *contos*, in municipalities with a budget revenue greater than 800 *contos*, could only be contracted through a public bidding process held at the Department of Municipalities building in Niterói. (Coimbra Bueno Ltda., 1941b)

On September 12, the office of Coimbra Bueno submitted a counterproposal. In broad terms, it suggested that the preparation of the urbanization plan, the projected works, and the planned expropriations be financed directly by the office. This financing would be offset by the anticipated increase in the value of plots following the implementation of the improvements outlined in the plan. The counterproposal stated the following:

1: The Municipal Government will carry out the expropriation of plots to be delivered to the firm, allowing them to be subdivided, improved, and sold by the firm to cover the associated expenses. 2: The firm will finance: a) the preparation of the urbanization plan; b) the expropriations; c) the execution of the works. 3: At its own expense, the firm will conduct all necessary studies, including the preliminary draft of the city's urbanization plan, which will outline the main features of the plan, indicate areas to be expropriated, and include other relevant details [...]. Plans devised in this manner have previously been implemented in other countries, for example, in Paris with the construction of the Boulevard Haussmann, where private initiatives were coordinated with public authorities in the execution of projects of collective utility. In Brazil, however, such approaches remain novel. National legislation has only recently begun to accommodate this objective; its main principles have been established, but a standardized administrative framework, capable of guiding all necessary processes and acts, has yet to be fully implemented. These circumstances will undoubtedly complicate Your Excellency's work in undertaking this task. (Coimbra Bueno, 1941a)

Still in December 1941, Mayor Cardoso de Miranda issued Ordinance No. 150 (Prefeitura Municipal de Petrópolis, 1941), recommending that matters related to the construction of larger buildings be submitted to the organizers of the urbanization plan for review before being examined by the technical departments of the Municipal Government. This marked the first municipal act assigning responsibilities to the office of Coimbra Bueno. In January 1942, the firm submitted a draft contract to the Municipal Government of Petrópolis (Coimbra Bueno Ltda., 1942), outlining how the plan would be prepared, the establishment of a concessionary company to manage the expropriated plots, and the mechanisms for financing the works and implementing the counter-benefits provided by the public authorities. The request was subsequently reviewed by the technical departments of the Municipal Government and by the Department of Municipalities of the State Government. This suggests that, at least until the end of April 1942, no formal contract had been finalized, even though the office was already actively working on preparing the plan.

In the meantime, on February 28, 1942, Alfred Agache gave a talk entitled “Petrópolis: The Summer City” (Agache, 1942) in the Great Hall of the Municipal Palace. Accompanied by engineer Abelardo Coimbra Bueno, the urban planner reportedly presented a general outline of the Urbanization Plan then being prepared for the federal capital<sup>5</sup>. The event received extensive coverage in the local press as well as in media outlets in the federal capital. Four days later, the newspaper *A Noite* interviewed Agache at the offices of Coimbra Bueno in Rio de Janeiro, during which he elaborated on his talk and the proposals for the urbanization plan of Petrópolis. This interview remains one of the principal documents concerning the plan, since it provides an insight into the concrete nature of the proposals (A fisionomia [...], 1942, pp. 1–2).

In the same edition, the newspaper reported on Agache’s visit to the office responsible for the urbanization plan for the Quitandinha<sup>6</sup> neighborhood. On that occasion, he mentioned that the plan for the Quitandinha complex “fits admirably with the urbanism plan I am designing for Petrópolis” (Conjuga-se [...], 1942, p. 4).

Following the aforementioned talk, both the local press and media in the Federal District were unanimous in their praise. When criticism did occur, it targeted not Agache’s proposals but those who had failed to follow the layouts he had established, as exemplified by the initially shelved Rio de Janeiro City Plan. The column in the magazine *Pequena Ilustração* is particularly emblematic in this regard:

Petrópolis is set to undergo an “Agacharization”, that is to say, its appearance will be transformed by the renowned French urban planner Professor Alfredo Agache, who has already carried out some astonishing projects in Rio and other cities. The winding, poorly paved streets will disappear; parks and gardens, previously laid out with little attention to artistic or aesthetic considerations, as well as the buildings in the city center, will adopt a uniform and harmonious style. In their place, splendid avenues and elegant gardens will emerge, enhancing what is already beautiful. (Petrópolis e o Plano Agache [...] 1942a, p. 5)

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5. Some of the media outlets that reported on the talk included: PETRÓPOLIS cidade de verão [PETRÓPOLIS: Summer City], *Jornal de Petrópolis*, Petrópolis, p. 1, March 1, 1942; A CONFERÊNCIA do professor Alfredo Agache [The Talk by Professor Alfredo Agache], *Tribuna de Petrópolis*, Petrópolis, [n.p.], 1 March 1942; The Illustrated Lecture of Professor Agache, *Pequena Ilustração*, p. 2, March 8, 1942.

6. Although the report does not mention it, it is possible that the office visited was that of engineer Saboia Ribeiro, since the urbanization plan for the new Quitandinha neighborhood was signed by this office (Saturnino de Brito, 1942). SATURNINO DE BRITO, F. *Saneamento de Quitandinha: Relatório dos projetos elaborados para os serviços de abastecimento de água e esgotos do novo bairro Quitandinha* [Sanitation of Quitandinha: Report on the Projects Developed for the Water Supply and Sewerage Services of the New Quitandinha Neighborhood]. Petrópolis: Escritório Saturnino de Brito, 1942.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding whether the office was formally hired, or whether a final document systematizing the plan ever existed, some visual materials have been located in various media. One such document, entitled “The D. Pedro II Square – Study” (Figure 1), produced by the office of Coimbra Bueno and widely reproduced by different outlets throughout 1942, suggests a comprehensive proposal for the reorganization of roads, landscaping, architecture, and urban design in the city’s central square, still known today as D. Pedro II Square.

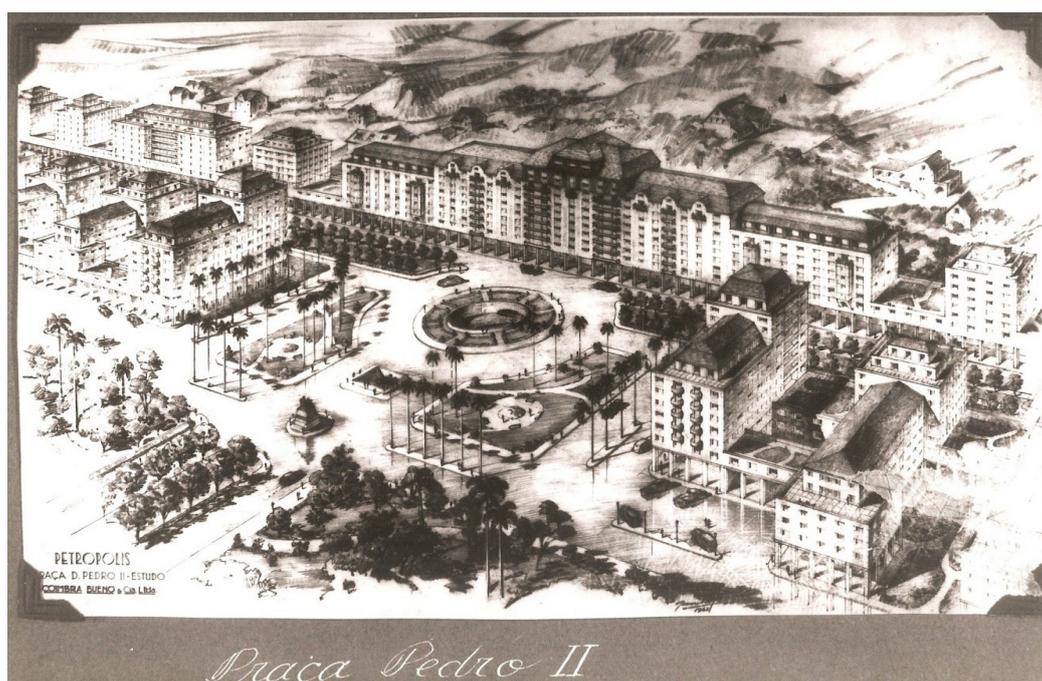


Figure 1. The D. Pedro II Square – Study (Coimbra Bueno Cia. Ltda.)

Source: Documentary Survey on Urbanism in Brazil, Universidade Federal Fluminense (LDUB/UFF), [s.d.].

Based on the documentary survey, there is no clear evidence that the office of Coimbra Bueno was formally contracted by the public authorities to prepare an urbanization plan for Petrópolis. This contrasts with Azevedo’s (2012) findings for other municipalities in the state of Rio de Janeiro, such as Araruama and São João da Barra, including its seaside resort Atafona, where the author identified contracts executed between the office and the State Government. Consequently, the very existence of an urbanization plan for Petrópolis during this period remains uncertain.

What is striking, however, is that, regardless of whether a plan was officially publicized, some of these proposals later served as guidelines for the urban development of Petrópolis, with portions of them eventually being implemented. Based on the documents examined, the main ideas and proposals put forward by

the office of Coimbra Bueno are highlighted below, followed by a discussion of the touristic elements they incorporated.

#### 4. Presentation and analysis of the proposals

From the outset, a clear similarity and complementarity may be observed between the plan that Agache developed for the city of Rio de Janeiro (Agache, 1927) and the proposals put forward by Coimbra Bueno for Petrópolis, even though the latter were embryonic, dispersed, and less detailed than the 426 published pages of studies, diagnoses, proposals, maps, and models comprising the Rio plan. The first notable similarity lies in the theoretical and methodological approach. Both studies adopted a functional perspective, evident in their discourse and actions, in which the master plan serves as a method and zoning as an instrument guiding both proposals. The planning framework envisioned for Petrópolis similarly relied on zoning and other legal instruments. The main documents they were located reveal an intention to divide the city into specialized zones, each governed by its own regulations, thereby establishing a functional discipline over urban order. Agache's own words illustrate this concept well:

[...] the remodeling and transformation of specialized centers—from the commercial center, with its market and railway and bus stations; the social and recreational centers, with their headquarters and clubs; the civic center, encompassing public buildings, government palaces, the City Hall, and other offices housing various state secretariats; and finally, the residential and aristocratic areas, through to the district designated for industrial activities. [...] For the successful execution of the plan [...] it is of paramount importance to implement, within each of these centers or neighborhoods, a distinct architectural discipline that aligns with the aesthetics and intended functions of each. (A fisionomia [...], 1942, p. 1-2)

As with the Agache Plan for the city of Rio de Janeiro, the proposals for Petrópolis can be summarized in three basic dimensions: (i) remodeling, (ii) expansion, and (iii) beautification, as Agache synthesizes:

This enhancement of the urban appearance of Petrópolis may be divided into three essential parts, the execution of which requires harmony and discipline to achieve the greatest overall beauty. In summary, these parts are as follows: the remodeling of the commercial center, prior guidance for its future horizontal and vertical development, and, finally, general beautification through the creation of new parks, gardens, and avenues, each with designated areas for vehicles, horse riders, and pedestrians. (A fisionomia [...], 1942, p. 1-2)

In describing the proposals for Petrópolis, Agache makes explicit his intention to transform the city into an “elegant” suburb of the federal capital, following a model akin to that of Versailles for Paris. The following passage exemplifies this aspiration:

Due to its location and distinctive characteristics, Petrópolis is destined to play for Rio the same role that Versailles plays for Paris. An elegant city, with a climate and environment ideally suited to its reputation as a desirable, easily accessible retreat for those escaping the heat and bustle of the metropolis, Petrópolis, when considered from the perspective of modern urban planning, possesses both “charm” and flaws. It may be likened to a very beautiful child whose growth is restrained so as to preserve its own beauty. To keep pace with progress and meet the demands arising from the remarkable development of the nearby Brazilian capital, this picturesque mountain city now requires some adjustments to its traditional and historical appearance. (*A fisionomia [...]*, 1942, p. 1-2)

This passage also highlights a notable feature of Agache’s projects: an emphasis on historical aspects. As noted at the outset, the initiative to provide Petrópolis with an urbanization plan was conceived in the context of the municipality’s centennial celebrations. Central to the preparations for these festivities, organized by a group with conservative leanings, was the revival and valorization of local historical memory. Naturally, any plan developed had to be aligned with this objective. Both Agache, in his interviews, and the documents produced by the office of Coimbra Bueno reflect this concern. For example, in an interview given in 1941—still at the early stages of the work—Agache requested from the municipal authorities “descriptive documents on the founding and evolution of Petrópolis to serve as a basis regarding local traditions” (*Remodelação*, 1941, p. 2). Similarly, in the passage cited in the previous paragraph, he carefully notes the need for Petrópolis to undergo “some adjustments to its traditional and historical appearance”, signaling attention to the city’s historical urban layout, architectural and landscape ensemble, and the preservation and valorization of local “traditions,” while simultaneously suggesting adaptations to meet contemporary requirements.

The suggestion regarding zoning itself includes the phrase “taking into account the existing zoning” (Coimbra Bueno, 1941a). Thus, the proposals did not aim to produce a sharp rupture in the urban appearance of Petrópolis. Rather, the office sought to follow—and, where appropriate, update—the instruments already in place in the municipality, rather than introduce a radical departure.

Another striking feature highlighted in the documents is the contrast between the city’s existing functional activities, which challenges the simple

dichotomy between industrialization and tourism. This characteristic is made even clearer in the first item of the “Diagnosis of the City of Petrópolis” presented in the preliminary proposal, where the city’s “main functions” are defined as follows: a) Rest and summer residence (garden city); b) Industrial park; c) Provisional Capital of the Republic; d) Tourism” (Coimbra Bueno, 1941a, p. 6).

Subsequently, the urban planners present the following assessment: “The functions of a resort city and an industrial park are antagonistic. This should be the subject of careful study (zoning, regulation, traffic)” (ibid.).

Several aspects can be highlighted based on the definition provided by the office of Coimbra Bueno. First, Petrópolis is clearly positioned within the regional context, exhibiting a distinct relationship of influence and interdependence with the federal capital. Second, among the four functions previously defined, three are closely tied to the aspect of tourism—rest and summer residence, Provisional Capital of the Republic, and tourism—whereas the function of industrial park appears marginal and even somewhat negative within this context. Zoning thus emerges as a potential tool to “discipline” this tension:

These are two functions whose proximity is antagonistic and which may become incompatible, compromising the future of the city if there is no rational planning. Only zoning can resolve this serious problem, by making the best use of the areas. Although already somewhat belated, there is still time to establish a regulatory framework for these contrasting functional activities, providing for and anticipating the growth of each. (Petrópolis e seu [...], 1942b, p. 15)

Despite the dichotomy and the acknowledged importance of industrialization for the city, the discourse places greater emphasis on the elements intended to promote tourism, while industrialization is already framed as a “problem”—one to be disciplined, set apart, and controlled. This tendency is evident in the strong focus on both improvements and aesthetic embellishments, as well as on circulation and traffic. Significantly, aesthetic and traffic-related concerns are presented side by side, underscoring their perceived complementarity. In other words, functionality and beautification are addressed as allied principles within the proposals. Of the six main improvements outlined for the city, nearly all relate to these two dimensions. According to Agache:

1: to improve and beautify the access routes to and from the city; 2: to open a bypass road to prevent buses, trucks, and other through-traffic from crossing Petrópolis; 3: to construct scenic roads linking the various talwegs (valley lines), each with its specific utility; 4: to rectify and widen riverbeds, where necessary, in order to mitigate

recurrent flooding; 5: to create gardens, parks, and sports grounds for both children and adults, as well as to designate forest areas for woodland preservation and leisure zones; and 6: to remodel and reorganize specialized centers—namely, the commercial, with its market and rail and bus stations; the social and recreational, with their headquarters and clubs; the civic, comprising public buildings, the Government Palace, City Hall, and offices of the State Secretariats; and lastly, the residential and aristocratic districts, together with the area designated for industrial activities. (A fisionomia [...], 1942, p. 2)

These proposals for improvements and beautification are closely linked to the goal of “touristifying” Petrópolis. The first proposal, concerning the access routes to and from the city, bears a strong resemblance to Agache’s “Gateway to Brazil”, one of his main projects for the Federal District plan. Like the Federal District project, it not only served a civic function but also a touristic one, designed to enhance the first impression of foreign visitors arriving in the city—and, by extension, the country. The key difference was that in Rio de Janeiro this impression would be formed via maritime access, whereas in Petrópolis it would be achieved by land.

The second and third proposed improvements pertain to road infrastructure. They aimed to improve circulation, alleviate traffic congestion, and simultaneously introduce new routes with a landscaped aesthetic that also served touristic purposes. At that time, vehicles traveling from the municipality of Rio de Janeiro toward Juiz de Fora, in the state of Minas Gerais, were required to pass through Petrópolis, since no direct connection existed between the Rio-Petrópolis and União Indústria (Petrópolis–Juiz de Fora) highways, resulting in heavy traffic in the city’s central streets. The proposed “bypass road” was intended to establish a direct connection between the two highways outside the urban perimeter, thereby reducing vehicle flow in the city center. Furthermore, the progressive demand for automobiles promoted by a road-based transport system, coupled with the termination of the tram concession, which left road-based collective transport as the city’s sole mode of public transit, necessitated the creation of new spaces within the city’s circulation network, further accentuating the need for road restructuring. The project illustrated in Figure 1 proposed widening certain existing streets, opening new thoroughfares, constructing bridges, and partially rectifying and canalizing rivers—corresponding to the fourth improvement—alongside a complete reorganization of the central intersection. All of these measures were integrated with a comprehensive aesthetic and landscape reconfiguration of squares and gardens, as well as the architectural redefinition of surrounding buildings.

Regarding the fifth improvement, concerning the demarcation of recreational areas and the creation of gardens and parks, Agache attributed a central role to

the new complex under construction in the Quitandinha neighborhood, which he described as the “recreational center”. In the same interview, he offered the following description of the complex:

Quitandinha, recreational center: During one of my recent visits to Petrópolis, I had the opportunity to tour the significant work being carried out in Quitandinha. The remarkable recreational center, now nearing completion as part of the extensive program of touristic enhancement developed by the State Government of Rio, represents a major initiative that I, as a specialist in such undertakings, consider truly ambitious, given the monumental details of the magnificent ensemble. Looking at this work within the broader urban plans required by the beautiful city of Petrópolis, I have no doubt that it deserves appreciation both as a factor of beauty and as a key element for enhancing the city’s future metropolitan character. Moreover, Quitandinha is a privileged location for a recreational area, not only for the residents of Petrópolis, but also for the thousands of summer visitors from Brazil and abroad, who will find in these lovely mountain retreats everything they need for the pleasure of the eyes, body, and spirit. (A fisionomia [...], 1942, p. 2)

This statement indicates that, at that moment, these two initiatives, the urbanization plan for Petrópolis and the plan for the Quitandinha Complex, appeared to be in close dialogue. However, it should be noted that, initially, the construction and urbanization of this complex, and the development of the Urbanization Plan for Petrópolis were independent projects; their convergence occurred over the course of 1942.

The sixth and final improvement encapsulates the principle that the city should be organized through detailed zoning. As this aspect has already been partially addressed, attention is now drawn to the pronounced civic focus expressed in the proposed reforms. In addition to the widening of central avenues, which at the time were also conceived to accommodate civic events and military parades, the redesign of the D. Pedro II Square seems to have been conceived as a landscaped ensemble complementing the ongoing transformation of the former imperial residence into the Imperial Museum. Although Agache did not specify the precise location of the “civic center, which should include public buildings, the Government Palace, City Hall, and offices of the State Secretariats” (A fisionomia..., 1941, p. 2), it is possible that these were intended to occupy buildings projected around that square. Since the proposal was not implemented in subsequent years, and also had only a tenuous connection to the touristic aspect, it will not be analyzed further in the following section.

5. Which proposals developed by the Coimbra Bueno Office actually “left the drawing board”

Although there is no evidence that the urbanization plan for Petrópolis developed by Coimbra Bueno was ever formally published, it is evident that some of the proposals presented eventually took shape and were eventually realized—either at that time, a few years later, or even several decades afterward.

It is important to recognize that these proposals should not be interpreted solely as fully developed ideas produced by the office’s team, since an urbanization plan can constitute a general compilation of identified problems and solutions constructed in dialogue with local actors. In other words, it does not necessarily consist of a set of original propositions devised exclusively by urban planners. Thus, an urbanization plan may incorporate preexisting projects and suggestions<sup>7</sup>. Agache’s own plan for Rio de Janeiro was, in part, realized as a result of propositions and ideas disseminated by local professionals regarding the city; it was Agache’s role to systematize these and to introduce new perspectives. (Silva, 2020; Outtes, 1999)

This section presents several ideas that were, at least in part, implemented over time, followed by an examination of the extent to which these proposals were realized.

#### 5.1 Zoning as a central instrument of municipal territorial organization

The proposals put forward by the Coimbra Bueno Office emphasized the need to develop detailed zoning, as it was regarded a central instrument of urban organization. Although it is unclear whether the Zoning Law enacted in March 1941 (Petrópolis, 1941) was taken into account, the critical stance of the urban planners

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7. An example of this is the numerous articles produced by José Marianno Filho in the local press and published in the 1930s (Marianno Filho, 1933), in which the author reported a series of urban problems in Petrópolis and proposed a set of potential solutions. The same can be said of the debates organized by the Petrópolis Rotary Club during this period. It is evident that some of Marianno Filho’s propositions, as well as the discussions held at that institution—Marianno Filho was a speaker at one of them in 1940 (Marianno Filho, 1940)—partially resemble the proposals of the Coimbra Bueno Office. It should be highlighted that, although he trained as a physician, José Marianno Filho gained renown for his work in literature, architecture, urbanism, and Brazilian art. He is recognized as one of the founding figures of the artistic movement known as “neocolonial.” He even served as director of the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes between 1926 and 1927, a period during which he participated in the commission responsible for discussing a new urban plan for the city of Rio de Janeiro, which ultimately led to the hiring of Alfred Agache to develop the aforementioned Agache Plan for the then-federal capital. MARIANNO FILHO, J. O problema florestal de Petrópolis [The forest problem of Petrópolis]. *O Cruzeiro*, Rio de Janeiro, 1933. MARIANNO FILHO, J. Problemas urbanísticos de Petrópolis [The urban problems of Petrópolis]. *Brilhante conferência proferida no Rotary de Petrópolis pelo rotariano José Marianno Filho [Outstanding Lecture Presented at the Petrópolis Rotary Club by Rotarian José Marianno Filho]*. *Revista Rotary Club Brasileiro* (separata), Rio de Janeiro, jun. 1940.

toward certain existing instruments is evident. As Agache noted in the year following the law's publication: "[...] the regulations to be developed should not be uniform for the entire city, but rather multiple and thoroughly studied, according to the characteristics and urban specialization of each organized zone". (Agache, 1942)

The critique stemmed from the relatively generalist nature of the 1941 Zoning Law, which did not account for the so-called "specialized centers" (civic and recreational, for example) and could therefore be considered incomplete from Agache's perspective. Nevertheless, a faint resemblance may be observed between the essence of the urban planners' proposals and the provisions of the aforementioned law. It is also noteworthy that, over the years, the Zoning Law was gradually supplemented, detailed, and updated with new regulations that increasingly recognized the specificities of each zone, as exemplified by Deliberation No. 2,613 of 27 October 1967 (Petrópolis, 1967), which, although published twenty-six years later, established the delimitation and specific elements of the Industrial Zone. It should be reiterated that the 1941 Zoning Law became the central instrument for territorial organization of the city in the subsequent decades.

By establishing differentiated rules and restrictions for each zone, this instrument introduced a segregating and unequal bias into the city's evolution and development. Broadly speaking, the 1941 Zoning Law served to preserve, through a legal-juridical instrument, an urban order historically constructed to exclude the so-called "undesirables"—including workers, industries, popular housing, and small-scale commerce—while facilitating the incorporation of new elements of modernity, such as road-based transport and tourism.

Ribeiro (2014, p. 85), in a study describing the housing problem faced by industrial workers in Petrópolis during this period, stated that the few measures implemented to address the issue were motivated by the declared intention to "locate the workers" close to their workplaces, i.e., in the peripheral areas where the city's main textile industries were concentrated.

This zoning is of considerable significance, as regulations in the following decades used it as a reference. For this reason, it may be asserted that it served as a central instrument for territorial organization of the municipality over several years.

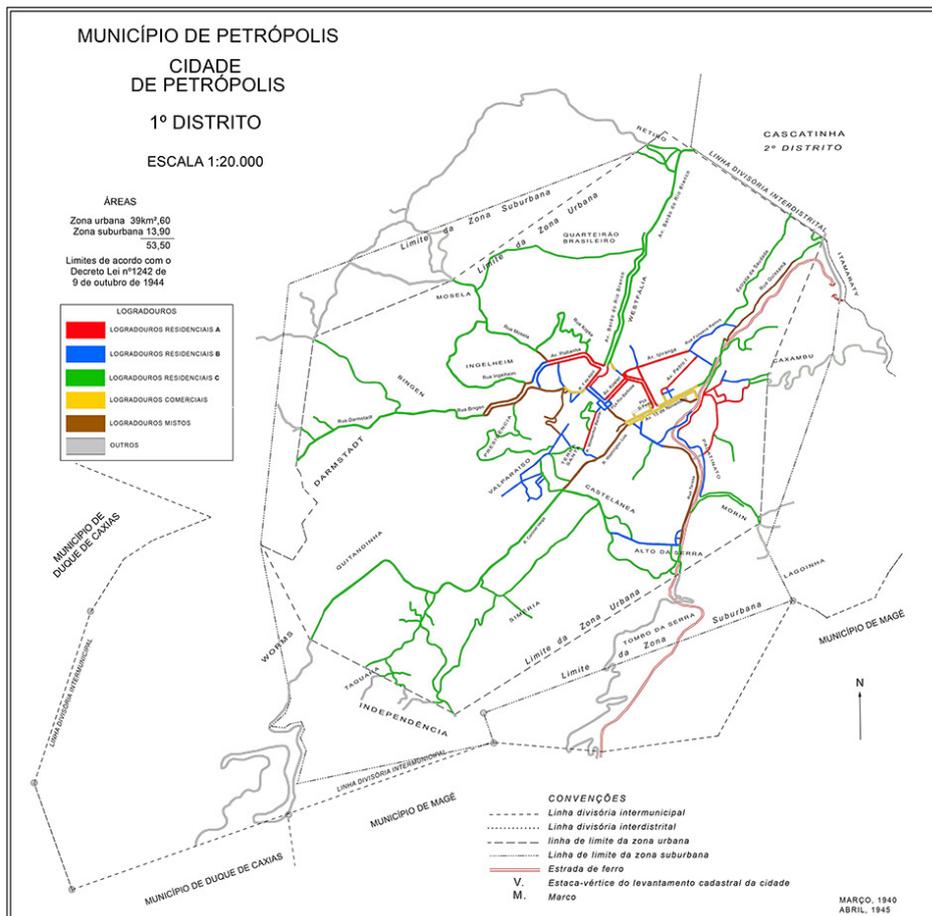


Figure 2. The 1941 Zoning Decree-Law overlaid on the map of Petrópolis (1945)

Key: Municipality of Petrópolis; City of Petrópolis; 1<sup>st</sup> District; Scale 1:20.000; AREAS – Urban Zone 39km<sup>2</sup>.60 Suburban Zone 13.90; Boundaries according to Decree-Law No. 1242 of October 9, 1944. Thoroughfares – Residential Thoroughfare A; Residential Thoroughfare B; Residential Thoroughfare C; Commercial Thoroughfares; Mixed Thoroughfares; Others. CONVENTIONS - Inter-municipal dividing line - Inter-district dividing line – Urban zone boundary line – Suburban zone boundary line – Railway - Vertex marker of the city's cadastral survey – Landmark.

Source: Adapted from the PETRÓPOLIS-CIDADE map. City plan of Petrópolis (Prefeitura Municipal de Petrópolis, 1945).

## 5.2 Improvements to the central area – overall beautification, road restructuring, and urbanistic, architectural, and landscape interventions

It is evident that the designs proposed by the Coimbra Bueno Office were not carried out to the letter. However, it may be perceived that, over the years, certain central proposals appear to have materialized, such as the creation of new thoroughfares around D. Pedro II Square. Rua do Centenário—now Dezesesseis de Março—was opened in 1943, having already been included in the plan and likely underway when the projects were published.

It should be emphasized that this area has undergone multiple road and aesthetic restructurings from the period under study to the present day, including a more recent intervention carried out during the administration of Mayor Rubens Bomtempo, between 2005 and 2008. A particularly significant restructuring took place in the latter half of the 1950s, under the administration of then-Mayor Flávio Castrioto, as may be observed below.

*Commercial Center Urbanization* – The pressures of progress increasingly demanded the urbanization of the commercial center, which had proved inadequate to accommodate the existing traffic, particularly during the summer, when thousands of automobiles, mainly arriving from Rio, circulated along the streets of Petrópolis. At the beginning of that year, Mayor Flávio Castrioto initiated the renovation of the streets in the commercial center. [...] Rua Nilo Peçanha was extended to Rua 7 de Setembro and was soon to be linked to Rua 16 de Março through the construction of a bridge. With regard to the works on Avenida 15 de Novembro, the city's main thoroughfare, [...] traffic lanes were widened by two and a half meters on each side of the river that runs along the avenue, resulting in an overall widening of five meters. The bridges at the João Pessoa, General Osório, and Marechal Deodoro streets were tripled in width, while in the section corresponding to D. Pedro Square—the heart of the city—the Palatinato and Quitandinha rivers were covered over for more than 150 meters. This intervention created a new square, at the center of which the Obelisk of Colonization was erected [...]. (Urbanização, 1957)

In Coimbra Bueno's proposal, the confluence of the Palatinato and Piabanha rivers, formerly known as the "Bacia", was to be partially covered, leaving a circular opening that would also serve as a central roundabout at the intersection of the avenues. In 1957, however, this "Bacia" was entirely covered, giving rise to the square that would later host the construction of the Obelisk. Despite this deviation from the original plan, it is evident that several of the road proposals were in fact implemented, including the extension of Rua Nilo Peçanha to connect it with Rua Dezesesseis de Março, the widening of the main avenue and its bridges, and the extensive covering of the river junction, which not only created a new square but also facilitated the expansion of bridges and adjacent roads. In terms of landscaping, the Municipal Government oversaw the replacement of some of the trees with smaller shrubs, reflecting, to some extent, the proposals made by the Coimbra Bueno Office. In other words, many of the firm's suggestions were realized during Castrioto's administration in the latter half of the 1950s. Figure 3 below illustrates part of these interventions.



Figure 3. Urban interventions on Avenida Quinze de Novembro – replacement of trees and construction of the Obelisk (in the background), possibly year 1957

Source: Historical Archives of the Imperial Museum (n.d.) [



Figure 4. Rua Irmãos D'Ângelo and the Arcádia Building (in the background)

Source: Available at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jorgebrasil/5436082996/>. Accessed on: April 4, 2024.

Another prominent thoroughfare is Rua Irmãos D'Ângelo, whose ensemble of buildings, although only completed in the early 1960s, forms extensive covered galleries supported by pilotis beneath the structures, with commercial shops on the

lower floors and residential apartments (or offices) on the upper floors, as presented in Figure 4. This feature is evident on both sides of the street. It is important to note that this thoroughfare is located in the heart of the city, just a few meters from D. Pedro II Square. Although the street layout does not appear in the sketches produced by the Coimbra Bueno Office, the buildings constructed there clearly display characteristics explicitly reflected in the drawings and in Agache's proposals for other cities, such as his plan for the city of Rio de Janeiro. (Agache, 1927)

At the center of the photograph, the Arcádia Building may be observed at the corner of D. Pedro II Square and Rua Dezesesseis de Março. Constructed in the late 1940s, the building bears a strong architectural resemblance to the sketch entitled "*D. Pedro II Square – Study*" (Figure 1), produced by the Coimbra Bueno Office. Its architectural style is reminiscent of the Art Deco proposed by Agache for parts of the city center in Rio de Janeiro. The main difference lies in its height, as the sketch depicts a building with fewer storeys.

Several other buildings erected in the central area of Petrópolis between the late 1940s and early 1960s exhibit aesthetic and functional characteristics closely aligned with the proposals of the Coimbra Bueno Office, despite not adhering to the exact locations indicated in the sketches. It is even possible that these buildings were constructed elsewhere precisely because the original sketches called for the demolition of older architectural ensembles, some dating back to the nineteenth century. The proposal to replace these structures was likely met with resistance, particularly from preservationists, so the intended improvements were therefore implemented in alternative locations, as exemplified by the new Rua Irmãos D'Angelo.

### 5.3 The opening of the bypass road and scenic roads

This road project was completed and officially inaugurated in 1960. Named the *Estrada do Contorno* (Bypass Road), it extended for 41 kilometers, connecting the district of Xerém (in the municipality of Duque de Caxias) to Bonsucesso (in Petrópolis' Itaipava district), thereby circumventing the city's urban perimeter. As a result, it was no longer necessary to pass through the city center when traveling by road between Rio de Janeiro and Juiz de Fora. The initiative was undertaken by the federal government through the National Highways Department (DNER).

Beyond its significance as a transport route, the Bypass Road was also conceived as a scenic road intended to promote tourism. Two belvederes were planned along the route, each equipped with restaurants and fuel stations (Gomes, 2011), partially fulfilling the goal of creating "several scenic roads". (A fisionomia..., 1942, p. 2)

#### 5.4 Improvement and beautification of the access routes to and from the city

This improvement resulted from the construction of porticos at the city's various access points, implemented only from 1999 during the administration of Mayor Leandro Sampaio (1997–2000). The first of these, built at the entrance to Quitandinha (Figure 5), was inaugurated in November of that year.



Figure 5. Portico at the entrance to Quitandinha on the eve of its inauguration

Source: *Tribuna de Petrópolis* (1999, p. 8).

According to the newspaper *Tribuna de Petrópolis*:

Built in a Neoclassical style echoing the design of the Imperial Museum, the structure at the entrance of Avenida Ayrton Senna in Quitandinha will accommodate a Tourist Information Center, a Military Police post, space for souvenir shops, and an ATM. (Leandro..., 1999, p. 8)

During the administration of the same mayor, the entrances to the Bingen neighborhood, accessible via the Bypass Road, and to the district of Itaipava were outfitted with police stations and Tourist Information Centers, with the promise that porticos would be installed at a later date. However, this only occurred in 2008. In other words, improvements to the city's access routes were implemented more than half a century later.

## 5.5 The creation of gardens, parks, and squares and the demarcation of forested areas

Several of the city's squares and gardens underwent improvements. The garden of the Imperial Palace itself was upgraded and became a public space with the transformation of the property into a museum, opened in 1943. The new Quitandinha neighborhood was also designed with extensive tree planting, including a series of squares and gardens, as well as a park surrounding the lake located in front of the Hotel-Casino. This park continues to be used today as a recreational area for the city's residents and visitors.

Regarding the preservation and demarcation of forested areas, Petrópolis had already benefited from two significant initiatives: Ordinance No. 8, of April 26, 1938 (Petrópolis, 1938), which regulated the conservation, felling, and replanting of trees and forests within the municipality, and the creation of the Serra dos Órgãos National Park in 1939 through Decree-Law No. 1,822. (Brasil, 1939) This ordinance established a set of regulations to protect public natural areas and imposed restrictions on the deforestation of private lands. Contemporary press reports highlighted this legislation as the first municipal legislation enacted in Brazil aimed at tree protection, demonstrating that the preservationist orientation present in Cardoso de Miranda's administration extended to broader environmental issues, rather than being limited to so-called cultural assets. It is important to note that the legislation also anticipated several key concerns, such as the promotion of sanitary, landscape, and aesthetic aspects, which were commonly appropriated by the tourism sector.

In the municipal legislation, Deliberation No. 584, of August 1, 1955 (Petrópolis, 1955) establishes: "Article 1. The City Park is hereby established in the 1st District of Petrópolis, in the Caxambú neighborhood, with the purpose of promoting tourism in our City". Other conservation areas were delineated over the ensuing years.

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## 6. Final remarks

Regardless of whether a formal "Agache Plan" or a "Coimbra Bueno Plan" for Petrópolis ever actually existed, it is evident that a body of ideas debated for its formulation—through projects, sketches, and conferences—gradually took shape and was at least partially implemented over the years. These ideas may be summarized as follows: (i) zoning as a central instrument for the territorial organization of the municipality; (ii) improvements, beautification, and road

restructuring in the city center; (iii) the construction of the bypass road; (iv) the improvement and beautification of the access routes to and from the city; and (v) the creation and redevelopment of gardens, parks, and squares, as well as the demarcation of environmental preservation areas.

This set of proposals and concepts, aligned with other initiatives undertaken during the period, such as the construction of the Quitandinha Complex and the inauguration of the Imperial Museum, underscored the city's tourist activity, which grew steadily over the years in scale, influence, and importance, eventually rivaling the traditional industrial activities.

Both the 1941 zoning and other regulations and proposals studied clearly sought to (re)establish or reinforce an urban order that separated the aristocratic, traditional, tourist-oriented, and central "Imperial City" from the industrial, working-class, and peripheral "Workers' City".

Echoing Cruz's (2006, p. 339) argument that "the tourist attractiveness of places is a cultural and historical construction", it may be concluded that the appeal of Petrópolis as a tourist attraction was consolidated during the Estado Novo, aided by the prevailing economic and political context.

Socio-spatial segregation in Petrópolis, present since its foundation, and intensifying over time, was not simply the result of a "set of occupations" or of "disordered growth," as is often suggested by public opinion, the press, or local memoirists. On the contrary, this segregation was the outcome of a succession of deliberate planning measures orchestrated by the dominant social groups of each era, who shaped the urban territory through legal and urban instruments designed to serve their economic and symbolic interests.

Believing, as does Rolnik (1997, p. 14), that urban order, "contrary to common sense, is not a matter of 'disorder' or 'lack of a plan', but rather the formulation of a territorial pact that governs the city's development", this study has aimed to explore how such a "territorial pact" was established in Petrópolis at a specific historical moment, since "[U]nderstanding how this pact was constructed, and the juridical-urbanistic principles underpinning it, is intended as a modest contribution toward its transformation".

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