

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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FERRÃO, Carlos (Lisbon, 1898 - Lisbon, 1979)

Ferrão came from a modest background, and despite training as a primary school teacher, even teaching at Casa Pia, he later became a journalist. Although his formal education was not extensive, he supplemented it by reading some of the highest-quality material, which he occasionally referenced in his work. With a sharp intellect, he mastered a fluid writing style that effortlessly drew readers in. As a journalist, he had access to international agency dispatches, which reached the newspapers' newsrooms without being subjected to censorship — information he skilfully utilised. He benefited from mingling with journalists and writers of exceptional calibre, including Joaquim Manso, Norberto Lopes, Mário Neves, José Ribeiro dos Santos, and Raul Rêgo. Ferrão became a distinguished commentator on international affairs. His professional career soon became closely intertwined with his calling as a historian. Focusing on international politics, he published chronicles in various periodicals, especially the *Diário de Lisboa* [Lisbon Daily] (where he worked for 42 years), in 1941, and with the help of *Livraria Sá da Costa* [Sá da Costa Bookshop] in Lisbon, he published the highly useful *ABC da política mundial* [ABC of World Politics] in which he alphabetically organised brief geographical and historical references, as well as the names of key institutions and political figures. In this way, he provided essential information for the many readers interested in following reports and commentary on international politics during the world conflict to which he was deeply committed. "The names, not always easy to retain, began to weigh on readers' memory." (*ABC*, n / n) It was also the war that led him to publish a series of books, compiling his chronicles. These works, rooted in current events which he sought to analyse and explain, reflected his open sympathy for Britain and the United States, a sentiment he later extended to Soviet Russia following the German invasion in 1941.

The works he published during the war, from 1940 to 1946, are notable not only for their analysis of the conflict, with particular emphasis on Europe, but also because they extend beyond mere reporting to explore the potential causes and consequences of current events. Responding to the curiosity and anxiety of readers following the events of this devastating cataclysm, Ferrão sought to offer insights for reflection. The series begins with a well-researched book, *Assim estalou a guerra. Organizado sobre os documentos diplomáticos revelados pelo "Livro Branco" alemão, "Livro Azul" inglês e "Livro amarelo" francês*. [This is How the War Broke Out. Organised Based on the Diplomatic Documents Revealed by the German "White Book," the English "Blue Book," and the French "Yellow Book."] This demonstrates the close reliance of his writing on



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these documents and their verified conformity. Carlos Ferrão (CF) consistently aimed to provide explanations — particularly through comparisons with the 1914-1918 conflict — thereby enriching his work. His esteemed debut book, *Seis meses de guerra* [Six Months of War], published in the same year, compiled the chronicles he had written in the *Diário de Lisboa* between 8 September 1939 and 26 March 1940. This tranquil book, written prior to the occupation of France and the Battle of Britain, focuses particularly on the nations suffering under the invasions of the great powers: the German Reich (Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland) and the Soviet Union (Finland and Poland). Prior to the occupation of France and the establishment of the national unity government in England, he wrote a brief biography of Winston Churchill, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty. This laudatory text highlighted the qualities of the man who would become the great democratic leader in the fight against Nazism, with CF already regarding him as "the greatest [Englishman] of his time" (*Churchill*, p. 6).

Os americanos no Norte de África [The Americans in North Africa] and *A Itália capitulou?* [Did Italy surrender?] provided two further chronicles of the international politics surrounding these events, alongside *A conferência de Moscovo* [The Moscow Conference], published at the end of October 1943, which marked a turning point in the war with the convergence of the United Nations and the Soviet Union. He expressed satisfaction with the genuine coalition that had formed, while not hiding the challenges foreshadowed by the Soviet stance on Poland. These pressing issues were ones he was eager to highlight beyond the mere pages of newspapers. He also focused particularly on the German defeat in *Como a Alemanha perdeu a guerra* [How Germany Lost the War]. Even after the conflict had ended, this attentive chronicler continued to write about the aftermath in *O drama de Nuremberg* [The Nuremberg Drama]. This work aims to demonstrate and justify the necessity of bringing those who, under the guise of war, committed or facilitated acts that are punishable as common crimes to international justice. Politicians needed to be held accountable for their roles in the horrors that occurred in Germany and subsequently in occupied Europe. This was decided at the Moscow Conference on 1 November 1943, and it was duly accomplished after 20 November 1945.

The memory of the events of the 1914-1918 war plays a crucial role, with a strong emphasis on the responsibility of politicians. The journalist focused on occupied France, providing a precise explanation of Vichy's collaborationist policies with Germany while carefully distinguishing the periods when Laval, Flandin, and Darlan held power in governing France. For CF, the "people's matter played a fundamental role during this period of anguish and indecision" (*Os Americanos*. [The Americans]..., p. 40). Perhaps that is why there is a certain degree of complacency towards some personalities whose paths remain controversial. This was the case for Weygand or Giraud, and even General De Gaulle, who initially received little attention from him — although he would later regard him as a hero of World War II (*O Integralismo* [Integralism] I, p. 180). At first, De Gaulle is portrayed merely as a man aligned with the English, in contrast to Giraud, who is seen as aligned with the Americans. The differences between these generals are not explicitly highlighted. This was a remarkable exercise, especially considering that, at the time, there were still few resources available to support efforts to explain ambiguous behaviour and inexplicable decisions. *Os Americanos* (p. 108) highlights that the Allied landing in North Africa marked the beginning of the counter-offensive, leading to the total

occupation of France, the sinking of the French squadron at Toulon, and the complete submission of the Vichy regime to Germany.

CF also devoted himself to translating works that he believed could shed light on the swift unfolding of events, such as *Pearl Harbour: relato duma testemunha ocular* [Pearl Harbour: an Eye-Witness Account] by Blake Klark, *Preliminares da guerra a leste* [Preliminaries to the War in the East] by Grigore Gafencu, *Eu paguei a Hitler* [I Paid Hitler] by Fritz Thyssen (all from 1944) or *Condições de paz* [Conditions of Peace] by E. H. Carr (1945). He held particular admiration for Winston S. Churchill, who, in addition to the 1940 booklet, inspired him to translate three volumes of *As minhas memórias* [My Memoirs] (1941, 1942, and 1943). In the 1940s, he coordinated *História da Guerra 1939-1945* [History of the War 1939-1945] (1296 pp.), which brought together a variety of contributors and produced an insightful synthesis of this hecatomb that he had endeavoured to understand and comment on throughout his career. His work as a journalist marked him as somewhat of a pioneer in the field of contemporary history, an area to which few in Portugal were dedicated at the time. Almost all of the few historians then focused on the Middle Ages — whether for ideological reasons or out of caution — fearing that any attention to the modern and contemporary period might provoke political powers. While working with such rich material, CF recognises that the development of events "involved political factors and psychological factors, near causes and distant causes, obvious elements and unknown elements" (*Assim estalou*, p. 158). The path of the historian was thus established, marking him as the first Portuguese who could truly be called a historian of international relations. CF does not merely recount the events of this significant period; he seeks to understand and explain them. A remarkable chapter in *Os Americanos no Norte de África* illustrates his endeavour to comprehend the often divergent relationship between the United States and Europe. The reasons for this divergence are glaringly evident. That is why the "American spoke of business, the French of security, the English of disinterest, the Italian of homeland, the German of demands, and the Russian of socialism." (*Os Americanos*, p. 8). In the 1950s, alongside his work as a journalist at *Vida Mundial* [World Life], which he directed momentarily, and his contributions to *A Capital* [The Capital], *O Século* [The Century], and other newspapers, he published a *História Secreta da Guerra* [Secret History of the War] through *O Século*, which extended to 12 volumes. However, he did not mention the author or the individual responsible for the edition for unknown reasons. The same occurred with *50 anos da história do mundo: 1900-1950* [50 Years of World History: 1900-1950], published in 1952. During those years, his interests shifted, and he began to focus on the history of the First Republic, using books, pamphlets, and newspapers that encompassed nearly everything published on the topic. This work culminated in a substantial *História da República* [History of the Republic], edited by *O Século* in 1960 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic. Although he revealed himself as the author, the work contains no reference to him in that capacity. It offers a wealth of information and is richly illustrated, albeit with poor-quality graphics — possibly due to the limited printing technology available at the time. It presents a well-articulated, factual narrative that lies halfway between a chronicle and a historical analysis. As a republican, he dedicated himself to dispelling what he perceived as lies and slander about the regime, unafraid to engage in controversies with the monarchists who challenged him. In particular, he



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targeted the reactionary tradition rooted in the remnants of Lusitanian Integralism, which he aimed to confront. This work follows the path established by Raul Proença in the 1920s, with the publication of *Seara Nova* [New Harvest]. Drawing on the origins and inspiration of Charles Maurras' *Action Française*, he critiques the alleged connection to the traditional (absolutist) Portuguese monarchy. Conducting what could be described as an autopsy on a (deceased) myth, he meticulously seeks to demonstrate the "intellectual mediocrity and superfluous political nature" of that group (*O Integralismo*, vol. I, p. 48). He traces the movement's origins to its Belgian roots in 1913 (*Alma portuguesa [Portuguese Soul]*) later highlighting the Coimbra publication of *Nação Portuguesa* [Portuguese Nation], the notebooks of Mariotte, the dissertations of António Sardinha and Hipólito Raposo presented to the *Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* [School of Arts and Humanities of Lisbon] in 1915. He emphasises above all the integralists' inspiration from Charles Maurras' *Action Française*, which proved to be almost a verbatim copy of the French model. Even Joan of Arc was rendered by Nun'Álvares. "Without *Action Française* there would be no Lusitanian Integralism; without Maurras, there would be no Sardinha." (*O Integralismo*, vol. I, p. 114). He exposes the movement as a "complete translation of the French formula." (*Ibid.*, p. 116). Turning to the internal conflicts with the monarchists, this absolutist and anti-parliamentarian group eventually severed ties with the lord-lieutenant of King Manuel II and subsequently with the king himself — who remained loyal to the Constitutional Charter of liberalism that he had sworn to uphold. Supported by the criticisms that Integralism received from António Sérgio and Raul Proença in the 1920s and 1930s, he emphasises the racist and violent aspects ("white terrorism") of this group's proposed actions, which aimed primarily to establish a regime of integral and monarchical nationalism in Portugal. Shifting from doctrine to action, the group established the *Junta Central do Integralismo Lusitano* [Central Board of Lusitanian Integralism], marking the inception of a political party, despite its consistent denial of being one due to its opposition to the concept of political parties. They engaged in ongoing agitation and, for this purpose, published the newspaper *A Monarquia [The Monarchy]*, in 1917, which rarely featured verbal violence. The Integralists then became involved with Sidónio Paes and played an essential role in the Monarchy of the North, Tralutania, and Monsanto. During the Decembrist period, they had occupied key positions within both the administration and the army, highlighting their Germanophilia and betrayal during the 1914–1918 War. The third volume is dedicated to the actions of the integralists within the monarchist cause and the subsequent disintegration of that party, a result of "eternal personal quarrels and hateful vendettas" (*O Integralismo*, III, p. 29). This volume primarily recounts the split and estrangement from the exiled pretender to the throne, Manuel II. The integralists allied with the miguelists, choosing Duarte Nuno as their pretender. "The rivalries and hatred between monarchists then took on unprecedented proportions" (*O Integralismo*, III, p. 141). Without hesitation, CF highlights the contradictions and absurdities in the positions of certain monarchist doctrinaires, such as António Sardinha, Fernando de Sousa (Nemo), Hipólito Raposo, and Alfredo Pimenta. He does not exclude Paiva Couceiro, whom he describes as "by his arbitrary action, one of the most pernicious agents of national disorder and unrest (...)" (*O Integralismo*, III, p. 252). He sought to align the integralist doctrine with the supporters of King Manuel II, further deepening the divisions among the royalists. These divides were not mended by the Dover



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(1912) and Paris (1922) pacts. For CF, however, it was the integralist doctrine and actions that rendered the restoration of the monarchy unfeasible due to the division they introduced among its supporters.

Similarly documented with meticulous detail are the other books on the Republic, which tend to be quite controversial. These works directly and confrontationally challenge the monarchist positions that predominantly remained among supporters of Salazarism, who had a platform in the Catholic newspaper *Novidades* [News]. CF did not shy away from dismantling falsehoods and lies regarding the regicide, allowances to the Royal Household, King Carlos's diplomacy, education reforms, the defence of overseas territories, and many other aspects. His work is undeniably that of a committed republican, without any pretence of neutrality — which would be insincere on his part — but rather a well-researched and thoroughly documented exposé. This work remains unchallenged, supported by undisputed witnesses, although it naturally displeases those with more or less covertly antagonistic ideological positions.

Even at the end of a busy career, he authored a brief *História da República*, published by Terra Livre in 1976, followed by a well-informed edition and annotation of the *Memórias* [Memoirs] by José Relvas. A meritorious compilation of the *Relatórios sobre a Revolução de 5 de Outubro* [Reports on the Revolution of 5 October] was also owed to him; it was published by the Lisbon City Council in 1978 and warranted revision and expansion during the centenary celebrations in 2010. Throughout his life, he amassed an impressive library of 26,000 volumes on contemporary history, particularly focusing on the First Republic, which he sold to the State for a nominal sum in 1976. This invaluable collection is housed at the *Museu da República e da Resistência* [Museum of the Republic and Resistance] in Lisbon, known as the *Biblioteca Dulce Ferrão* [Dulce Ferrão Library].

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