

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>



NOVAIS, Fernando Antônio (Guararema, 1933)

Fernando Antônio Novais was born in Guararema, a town in the interior of the state of São Paulo, in 1933. He graduated in History from the University of São Paulo, where he also worked as a teacher and researcher between 1957 and 1986. He was initially an assistant professor to Alice Piffer Canabrava (1911-2003) in the subject of *História Econômica Geral e Formação Econômica do Brasil* [General Economic History and Economic Formation of Brazil] at the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, which had been recently created at the USP. However, it was in the subject of Modern and Contemporary History at the USP's History department, under the guidance of Eduardo D'Oliveira França (1917-2003), that he developed his research in line with the aim of the subject to scrutinise the links between Brazilian history and European history, particularly the history of Portugal.

Between 1958 and 1964 he was part of the group of researchers that formed the *Seminário Marx* [Marx Seminar] together with intellectuals such as Bento Prado Jr., Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Roberto Schwarz and José Arthur Giannotti. This way, his training encompassed an advanced reading and interpretation of Marx and the long term influences of the *Annales*, which were very influential in the first steps taken by USP historiography in the 30s and 40s. However, his readings went far beyond the possible limits posed by the urgency of explaining the entering of Brazil into world capitalism and the long term. When asked by this biographer about his readings of José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955), given that he mentions the Spaniard in the Introduction to his doctoral thesis when he states that the study of transitions in history is a fundamental process, he quickly replied: "Ortega wrote the best Marxist definition of history, which is that man does not have a nature, he has a history." Thus, moving between readings of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) and José Ortega y Gasset, and under the direction of Oliveira França in his search for links between the history of Portugal and the Brazilian experience— a fact that brought him closer to authors such as Jaime Cortesão (1884-1960), Vitorino Magalhães Godinho (1918-2011) and Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho (1920-1980)— Fernando Novais developed the concept of the *Old Colonial System*, a cornerstone of the historiographical debate on the meaning of colonisation and Brazilian independence.

It's fair to say that he followed the path opened by Jaime Cortesão, which emphasised the role of Portugal in the global process of maritime expansion and, in the midst of seas never sailed before, the formation of Brazil. Even if we consider the greater emphasis placed by the Portuguese historian on the development of Western civilisation, and by the Brazilian historian on the rooting of capitalism, the path opened by interpretations on the long term and of large structures was the major inspiration for both authors. In the same vein, he followed Vitorino Magalhães Godinho's concern with studies that pointed to the conditioning elements



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

of the expansionist nation regarding the regions it targeted and/or conquered as a criterion for understanding the forms of production and labour that were established based on the first contacts and subsequent relations. The warning given by the Portuguese historian was included in a 1957 article entitled "Colonização e desenvolvimento econômico" [Colonisation and economic development]. In his doctorate, *Portugal e Brasil na crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial (1777-1808)* [Portugal and Brazil in the Crisis of the Old Colonial System (1777-1808)], which he defended in 1973, the fine articulation between these readings in the formulation of the concept of the *Old Colonial System* presented readers with an explanation of maritime expansion and the resulting colonisation of Brazil as elements of the process of primitive capital accumulation— which would be the foundations for industrialisation and the rooting of capitalism in the contemporary world. In his view, this was a system created from the 16th century onwards. Its development in the 18th century was the basis for its own evolution, a process made evident with the opening of Brazilian ports to friendly nations in 1808, and ultimately— in a line of thinking he would come to develop in other texts— with the independence of Brazil in 1822. Since Brazil was the result of European colonisation, its independence would also become a part of the broader crisis of the European Ancien Régime, which had generated the colonisation processes studied by the author. In a response to his critics, who sought cyclic reasons for the opening of the ports and the independence of Brazil (Valentim Alexandre, 1942-), highlighted the aspects of interiorisation present in the process of Brazilian colonisation since its beginning (João Fragoso, 1959-), or considered the King's powers to be too distant from the many parts of the Portuguese Empire and, therefore, ineffective in the constitution of colonial companies (António Manuel Hespanha, 1945-), Fernando Novais dialectically observed that the colony — as an extension of the Metropolis — was also, and especially, its negation, a fact that would explain endogenous processes and the conditions of privacy in the lives of the colonisers and the generations that succeeded each other and moved through the vast Brazilian land, creating unforeseen circumstances in the original reasons behind colonisation.

Fernando Novais retired from the USP in 1986 and began teaching at the *Instituto de Economia da Universidade de Campinas* (UNICAMP) [Institute of Economics of the University of Campinas], where he remained until 2003. However, he is still today a professor in the Postgraduate Programme in Economic History at the USP's History Department. Throughout his prolific career, he also taught at the University of Texas, the University of Paris, the University of Louvain, the University of Coimbra and the University of Lisbon. In December 2006 he was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus of the *Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade* [Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences] of the University of São Paulo. In the 21st century, he chose to revisit the New History and the developments of the theme of the long term and the new challenges posed by cultural history, given the debates arising from historiographical clashes over the meanings of structuralism and the construction of narrative. On the path opened by what seems to be an interest in revisiting his career as a historian, he organised two books in partnership with one of the many doctors he trained, Rogério Forastieri da Silva, entitled *Nova História em Perspectiva* [New History in Perspective]. He continues to read and promote controversies, as is expected of great historians.

Active bibliography: (Editor) *História da vida privada no Brasil 2 – Império: a Corte e a modernidade nacional*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1997; (Editor) *História da vida privada no Brasil 3 – República:*

da Belle Époque à Era do rádio, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1998; “Braudel e a missão francesa”, in: *Estudos avançados (depoimentos)*, volume 08, número 22, São Paulo, 1994; “Condições de privacidade na colônia”, in Fernando A. Novais (Editor) *História da vida privada no Brasil 1 – Cotidiano e vida privada na América portuguesa*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1997, pp. 13-40; “Estrutura e dinâmica do Antigo Sistema Colonial (séculos XVI-XVIII)”, *Cadernos CEBRAP*, número 17, São Paulo, 1974; *Aproximações – Estudos de história e historiografia*, São Paulo, Cosac Naify, 2005; *Portugal e Brasil na crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial (1777-1808)*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 1986; NOVAIS & MELLO, “Capitalismo tardio e sociabilidade moderna”, in Fernando A. Novais (Editor) *História da vida privada no Brasil 4 – Contrastes da intimidade contemporânea*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1998, pp. 559-658; NOVAIS & MOTA, *A independência política do Brasil*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 1996; NOVAIS & SILVA (orgs.), *Nova História em perspectiva (dois volumes)*, São Paulo, Cosac Naify, 2011.

Passive bibliography: ARRUDA, José Jobson de Andrade, “Fernando Novais: um marxista pascaliano?”, in *Historiografia – Teoria e prática*. São Paulo, Alameda, 2014, pp. 251- 273; COSTA, Wilma P. “A independência na historiografia brasileira”, in JANCSÓ, I. *Independência: História e historiografia*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Fapesp, 2005, pp. 53-117; MALERBA, Jurandyr, “As independências do Brasil: ponderações em perspectiva historiográfica”, in *História*, volume 24, número 1, São Paulo, 2005, pp. 99-126; MORAES & REGO, *Conversas com historiadores brasileiros*, São Paulo, Editora 34, 2002; PIMENTA, João P., “A independência do Brasil como uma revolução: história e atualidade de um tema clássico”, in *História da historiografia*, número 3, Ouro Preto, 2009, pp. 53-82; RODRIGUES, Lidianie S. *A produção social do marxismo universitário em São Paulo: mestres, discípulos e ‘Um seminário’ (1958-1978)*. Tese de Doutorado apresentada à Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2011; SCHWARZ, Roberto, “Um seminário de Marx”, in *Sequências brasileiras*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1999, pp. 86-105; SOUZA, João Paulo A. de, “Entre o sentido da colonização e o arcaísmo como projeto: a superação de um dilema através do conceito de capital escravista mercantil”, In: *Estudos econômicos*, volume 38, número 1, São Paulo, 2008; SOUZA, Laura de Mello e, “Política e administração colonial: problemas e perspectivas”, in SOUZA, FURTADO & BICALHO, *O governo dos povos*, São Paulo, Alameda Casa Editorial, 2009, pp. 63-89; TEIXEIRA, Rodrigo Alves, “Capital e colonização: a constituição da periferia do sistema capitalista mundial”, in *Estudos econômicos*, volume 36, número 3, São Paulo, 2006.

Ana Lúcia Lana Nemi

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P, in the scope of the projects UIDB/04311/2020 and UIDP/04311/2020.



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

SUPPORTED BY:

BNP
BIBLIOTECA
NACIONAL
DE PORTUGAL

|

FUNDAÇÃO
LUSO-AMERICANA