

Review: The Origins and Nature of Authoritarian Rule in Portugal, 1919-1945

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The Origins and Nature of Authoritarian Rule in Portugal, 1919–1945

FILIPE RIBEIRO DE MENESES

- Aniceto Afonso, *História de uma conspiração: Sinel de Cordes e o 28 de Maio* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2000), 222 pp., €12.97, ISBN 972-46-1175-2.
- Manuel Baiôa, *Elites políticas em Évora: Da I República à ditadura militar (1925–1926)* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 2000), preface by António Costa Pinto, xvi + 344 pp., €21.45, ISBN 972-762-199-6.
- Telmo Faria, *Debaixo de fogo! Salazar e as forças armadas (1935–41)* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos & Instituto de Defesa Nacional, 2000), 286 pp., €26.44, ISBN 972-762-220-8.
- João Medina, *Salazar, Hitler e Franco: Estudos sobre a ditadura* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2000), 308 pp., €18.85, ISBN 972-24-1074-1.
- Fernando Rosas, *Salazarismo e fomento económico: O primado do político na história económica do Estado Novo* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2000), 259 pp., €13.92, ISBN 972-46-1110-8.
- Pedro Aires Oliveira, *Armindo Monteiro: Uma biografia política* (Venda Nova: Bertrand Editora, 2000), 340 pp., €17.96, ISBN 972-25-1122-X.

Studies regarding the origins and nature of António Oliveira Salazar's New State are being published in Portugal at an impressive rate. New sources and methods are being employed by Portuguese historians in an attempt to come to grips with a dictatorship which lasted forty-eight years and which, although able to change its guise, was always reluctant to do so, and was never as successful in transforming itself as Francoist Spain. What these recent studies indicate is that both supporters and opponents of the New State overestimated its internal cohesion and Salazar's room for manoeuvre within the confines set by the various groups which supported his rule. In this article a number of recent Portuguese works that shed some light on the end of the republican regime, the military dictatorship that followed, and the first phase of the New State's existence – until the end of the Second World War – are examined, in order to demonstrate the extent to which the creation of the New State was a precarious enterprise, and the way in which its development and impact were limited by Salazar's limited freedom of action. The Portuguese dictator had to make continuous concessions to those who supported his rule in order to remain in power, even in the 1930s and 1940s, usually held to be the decades in which the New State met with the least domestic and foreign opposition, and was thus able to

reflect most accurately Salazar's wishes. The visible result of these concessions was the emphasis given by the New State's ideologists to the virtues of stability and order, to the detriment of progress, development, and reform.

The attention given by historians of contemporary Portugal to Salazar's New State has one drawback: the unloved First Republic (1910–1926) continues to be largely ignored, or is studied merely as a prelude to dictatorship. One recent work that attempts to overturn this situation, by reminding us of how much we still have to learn about the First Republic, is Manuel Baiôa's *Elites políticas em Évora: Da I República à ditadura militar*. Its simple aim makes it essential reading for those studying the First Republic. What Baiôa sets out to accomplish is the identification of the political elites in the city of Évora, a district capital in a latifundia area, in order to understand their composition, motivations and political aims, as well as the ties that bound them. In so doing, Baiôa goes into great detail about the national and local elections which took place in 1925 and the reaction of Évora's elites to the military coup of May 1926. The appendices to the work read like a *Who's who* of Évora society, which has been subjected to minute examination. All candidates for local or national office, holders of administrative positions in the district, military officers stationed in the city, and members of professional, economic and commercial associations are identified: and to this long cast is given the breath of life, allowing the reader to watch closely as the final act of the Republic's existence was played out. We are thus in a better position to understand electoral rhetoric and practice, to evaluate the damage inflicted locally on political parties by the frequent splits which occurred at national level (notably, in 1925, the defection of the left wing of the ruling Democratic party under the leadership of former Prime Minister José Domingues dos Santos), and even to appreciate the machinations of the Democrats which resulted in their retention of one parliamentary deputy in the district, despite their clear defeat at the polls.¹

Baiôa's study also reveals the way in which national and local elections differed from each other: in the latter contests, faction-fighting was less pronounced and it was not uncommon for a leading local figure to appear on more than one electoral list. This was largely due to the scant numbers willing to be involved in politics, even in a city like Évora which had what in Portuguese terms was a robust and diverse political elite. Finally, Baiôa considers reactions to the coup of May 1926, which was initially welcomed by all formations, with the exception of the Democrats, who at the time controlled parliament, the government and the presidency, as well as the leading administrative positions around the country. The internal contradictions present in the army's action quickly led to the break-up of this consensus, but Baiôa makes it clear that it is impossible to generalise about this reaction at a national level without understanding precisely what happened at local level – something which, unfortunately, has often been done. Some parties (notably

¹ A good investigation of the mechanics of election rigging in the First Republic, which were the continuation of practices inherited from the constitutional monarchy, can be found in Fernando Farelo Lopes, *Poder político e caciquismo na 1ª República Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1993).

the Democratic Left) were still favourable in Évora to the military authorities when the leadership in Lisbon had begun to cry foul; conversely, the Nationalist party, the main conservative opposition group to the right of the Democrats, opposed the dictatorship, despite common aims and the fact that post-May 1926 administrative positions were filled by men drawn from backgrounds similar to those of the Nationalists' local membership. Historians of the First Republic can only hope that Baiôa's example is taken up by others, allowing for a better understanding of how the First Republic's political parties actually worked – an understanding now more firmly grounded in serious and systematic historical analysis.

Two of the groups mentioned above, the Nationalist party and the army, had often come together in the plotting to overthrow the Democratic party and alter the course of the Republic. This much is made clear in Aniceto Afonso's *História de uma conspiração*, which charts the progress of one of the early candidates for dictator, General Sinel de Cordes. He is in many ways a crucial figure in Salazar's rise to power because, having conspired against the Republic and refused any compromise with that regime after the coup of 28 May 1926, he was given the crucial job of Finance Minister, and was found badly wanting, compounding a crisis which threatened to bankrupt Portugal. It was Sinel de Cordes whom Salazar replaced in 1928, taking advantage of the country's catastrophic financial situation to impose his terms on the military government – an absolute say in the spending of every government department – becoming, as the press called him, *o ditador das Finanças*. Having been a deputy under the parliamentary monarchy, Sinel de Cordes was too closely identified with monarchist politics to be able to launch an overt challenge against the Republic; he therefore seized the opportunity presented by the disarray brought on Portugal by the First World War to attack the weakened regime, not as a monarchist, but as a nationalist, preoccupied by the future of his country. Afonso is able to trace – thanks to a detailed knowledge of the press in the years between 1919 and 1926 – Sinel's public pronouncements and writings, which, although outwardly designed to interest the general public in matters of defence, were actually messages to other army officers about how to resolve the country's political difficulties. Sinel de Cordes believed that social agitation and economic difficulties were simply a result of political disorder; once this had been solved everything else would fall into place. He felt that only the army could govern in a 'national' way, and correctly assumed that most other officers, the silent majority that was not involved in politics, felt the same. He also believed – and this, Afonso claims, was what set Sinel de Cordes apart from other conspirators – that the army had to act in a united and disciplined fashion, led as one entity by its highest-ranking officers. He reached this conclusion after a number of failed plots in which he was involved. These included the 'palace coup' in 1923, in which a rare Nationalist government attempted to use the excuse of a minor radical rising to force the president to dissolve parliament and call fresh elections (which the government, in power, and in accordance with traditional Portuguese politics, would win), but which the president, Teixeira Gomes, resisted, earning an enmity that would eventually lead to his early retirement and exile from Portugal.

Afonso relies almost exclusively on the press for his information, and his extremely lengthy quotes from Portuguese newspapers can become tiresome, as there is a great deal of repetition in the articles analysed. Although the thesis on which the work is based was accepted before the author was named director of the Army's Historical Archive, it is still interesting to note that these archives are not used in the book; neither is an attempt made to gauge, from official sources, how much the republican governments knew about each conspiracy and how they attempted to defend themselves. Nevertheless he is correct in pointing out the difficulty of his task – the chronicling of a conspiracy six years in the making – and the need to be thorough when examining the myriad coups and counter-coups that shook Lisbon in the seven years that followed the First World War. This confusion, and the constant creation and dissolution of political formations in the years 1919–26, is doubtlessly one of the reasons which makes the period so unattractive for researchers, who flock to the more ordered and well-documented New State.

A third work that covers the period under discussion is Pedro Oliveira's *Armindo Monteiro*. Biographies of even the most important national figures are few and far between in Portugal, despite a popular demand made clear by the success of the recently published biography of the country's first King, Afonso Henriques.² Professional distrust of the biography as a historical tool in Portugal is evident by the lack of an academic biography of Salazar, whose market success would be guaranteed.³ For that very reason Oliveira's study of Armindo Monteiro is a welcome addition. Oliveira draws parallels between the careers of Monteiro and Salazar, stressing Monteiro's excellent links with the business world and the high profile he enjoyed thanks to multiple professional activities (a lecturing position in the new Faculty of Law in Lisbon, positions on the boards of financial institutions, a regular column in a leading Lisbon daily, the *Diário de Notícias*), and pointing out the moment when Monteiro, perhaps out of loyalty, failed, through his silence, to transform himself into a contender for Finance Minister. Unlike Monteiro, Salazar castigated Sinel de Cordes' disastrous tenure of the same post, from the pages of the Catholic newspaper *Novidades*. As we have seen, Salazar demanded an absolute say over the nation's finances. Armindo Monteiro, in his academic work, had called for the creation of just such control, along with a general strengthening of the state's authority and a reduction of parliament's involvement in the country's finances, in order to resolve Portugal's difficulties. Although he was quickly brought into the government by Salazar, first as director general of the Statistics bureau (which, Pedro Oliveira points out, he effectively created), then as Under-Secretary of State for Finances, and in 1931 as Colonial Minister, Monteiro always saw himself as the equal of Salazar. In a cabinet which Salazar wished to dominate, even before becoming Prime Minister, Monteiro's pretensions quickly led to a rivalry between the two men. This rivalry would grow during Monteiro's short stay at the Ministry

² Diogo Freitas do Amaral, *Dom Afonso Henriques* (Lisbon: Bertrand, 2000).

³ The most extensive, but nevertheless unreliable and partial, biography of Salazar, thus remains the six-volume *Salazar*, by Franco Nogueira, the first volume of which was published in 1977. (Franco Nogueira, *Salazar: A mocidade e os princípios* (Coimbra: Atlântida Editora, 1977–85).

of Foreign Affairs (MNE), which saw him responding to the Abyssinian crisis and the start of the Spanish Civil War, and hit its peak during the Second World War, when Monteiro served in the most sensitive diplomatic position for Portugal – ambassador in London – while Salazar was, in addition to his other duties, Foreign Minister.⁴

Like many conservative Portuguese, Monteiro was an anglophile who believed that, while unsuitable in Portugal, parliamentary democracy was a worthwhile regime in an ordered society such as Britain's. Unlike Salazar, moreover, Monteiro did not believe that Britain and its empire could be defeated: until the tide of war turned the Allies' way, therefore, Monteiro played a dissenting role, urging Salazar to remain in the British sphere, and reminding him of the strategic circumstances that made Portugal's alliance with Britain vital to Portugal's survival (adding, after US entry into the war, that the role so far played by Britain in ensuring Portugal's independence would henceforth be in the hands of the United States, set to become the dominant Atlantic power). After the Allies seized the initiative in late 1942, Monteiro's position was not strengthened, because he became increasingly exasperated by Salazar's approach to negotiations with Britain, notably in relation to the use of the Azores by Allied aircraft. Salazar only moved after the lengthiest of deliberations, and then only as little as possible. Monteiro urged speed and decisiveness while Salazar reminded him of where his loyalty should lie. As Pedro Oliveira makes clear, not even Monteiro was sure where his loyalty lay by 1943, when he returned to Lisbon: he had taken to apologising to the British Foreign Office for Salazar's dilatory tactics, and in his private writings dwelled on the inevitability with which dictatorships, however meritorious at first, become corrupted and self-serving in the long term.

By 1943 it had become obvious to all observers that the two men were on a collision course. Staff at the MNE were riveted by the telegraphic duel between the two heavyweights, amazed that anyone could write to Salazar in such forthright terms,⁵ while Armindo Monteiro was discussed in London and in diplomatic circles in Portugal as a possible alternative to Salazar (which, of course, goes a long way towards explaining his rapid downfall). It was generally thought that the British would prefer to see him in charge of Portugal, and that Salazar, like Franco in Spain, would have to leave office as the war against fascism came to an end. This was not to be, however; but the readers of Pedro Oliveira's book are left wondering just what Monteiro made of his situation. Oliveira argues that there was a political motive behind Monteiro's suggestion that Salazar absent himself completely from the negotiations with the Allies over the Azores, and he also points out that Monteiro, by acting in London as if he had been dismissed by Salazar, who had

⁴ For a recent account of the Portuguese government's response to the Second World War during the period when Monteiro was in London, see António Telo, *Portugal na Segunda Guerra (1941–1945)*, I (Lisbon: Vega, 1991).

⁵ The full scale of this debate is not to be found in the Portuguese white book on the Second World War, which was doctored so as to perpetuate the myth of Salazar as a far-seeing international leader. *Dez anos de política externa* 15 vols. (Lisbon, MNE, 1961–1993).

done no such thing, intended to do maximum political damage to his hierarchic superior; however, he can find no smoking gun regarding Monteiro's ambitions. In any case, as he points out, Monteiro would continue to lead a full life upon his return to Lisbon, in academic and financial circles alike, and would, when called on to do so, reaffirm his support for the regime.

In his *Debaixo de fogo! Salazar e as forças armadas*, Telmo Faria attempts to illustrate the way in which Salazar slowly imposed his will on the Portuguese army. This was a crucial development in the affirmation of the New State as a durable civilian entity because, of course, Salazar had been recruited by the army following his criticism of Sinel de Cordes's performance in the Ministry of Finance. Salazar had been promised, at that moment, a tight control over expenditure, but not over the political future of the military dictatorship. Gaining the army's approval for a civilian regime was a difficult task, but reforming the army as a civilian was even more difficult, and required all of Salazar's guile and discipline. In order to carry out these twin tasks, Salazar and the New State ideologists enshrined the myth of the coup of 1926 as the opening move of a 'National Revolution', in which the nation's 'sound' elements, spearheaded by the army, had finally acted to put an end to the liberal experiment which was driving Portugal headlong into ruin. In other words, Salazar flattered the army in order to return Portugal to civilian (or better yet, his) rule. As we have seen already, the rhetoric of the 'National Revolution' was far from true, but by accepting unquestioningly the army's role as the initiator of a 'national movement' Salazar was buying room for manoeuvre. Even after having risen to Prime Minister, and after the adoption of the new Constitution in 1933, Salazar had to consult the army and act in accordance with its general wishes: Faria's book seeks to explain how this situation came to an end.⁶

In order to secure power in the 1930s, Salazar had to find a way of imposing his political will on the army while retaining its loyalty to the New State. He did this, over time, by holding out the lure of a reorganisation and a remodernisation that had long been awaited by the army. The Portuguese officer corps was only too well aware of its inability to carry out its most basic function: the protection of Portugal itself. Faria traces the way in which Salazar gained ascendancy over those who sought to preserve military control of the army's life with extreme care, a care which matches the way in which Salazar made every move, and which resulted in the exasperation of his opponents within the army, eventually driven by sheer frustration to make a mistake fatal to their ambitions. Thanks to his undisputed stranglehold on the nation's finances, Salazar could delay any reform which involved expenditure; he also took advantage of faction fighting within the officer corps and the ever-worsening international situation (especially after the Spanish Popular Front's electoral victory in February 1936) to wear down any opposition to his own

⁶ José Medeiros Ferreira, in his *O comportamento político dos militares: Forças armadas e regimes políticos em Portugal no Século XX* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1992), touched on the issue of the subordination of the armed forces to civilian rule under Salazar, inserting the topic into the wider discussion of civilian-military relations in Portugal in the twentieth century.

plans. Finally, in May 1936, he became War Minister, becoming thus the ultimate patron of the army and the sole authority able to initiate any reforms.

Faria also examines how Salazar was capable of standing up to military rivals, such as War Minister Passos e Sousa, who dreamed of a wartime army of 500,000 and a Portugal capable of defending itself from any aggression. Salazar had a number of devoted young officers, the army's 'technocrats', with no political affiliation, who provided him with detailed plans for reorganisation and reform, and who served as a foil for the discontent of their colleagues, and he was careful to preserve his influence over the president, General Óscar Fragoso Carmona. Whenever pressure from his military opponents became serious, Salazar would appeal for Carmona's support, threatening to resign: and the aging general, his place in the pantheon of the 'National Revolution' assured, came down on the side of 'his' Prime Minister. With such support, and finally in the position of War Minister, Salazar unveiled his vision of the army, which consisted of a small (and cheap) peacetime force of under 30,000 men, to be increased in case of war. To create this army, and to equip it properly, cuts would have to be made in the number of units and officers. Age limits were therefore introduced, as was promotion by merit, and retirement was made more attractive to senior officers. These were unpopular measures, but the army had no-one left to whom to appeal, especially as senior officers saw their salaries substantially increased, and as Salazar was using his new-found powers to place loyal officers in control of key units. Telmo Faria's conclusion, as a result of his meticulous research, is that Salazar did not believe any Portuguese armed force to be capable of defending the national territory, seeing the army only as a vital support of the New State. Salazar's long-awaited reform of the army, outwardly designed to make it leaner and more efficient, was politically motivated, and in no way improved Portugal's ability to defend itself. Salazar chose to rely on diplomacy to protect Portugal's territorial integrity. It was only in 1941 that he finally opened the purse strings, purchasing some of the equipment that the army, increasingly worried by the course of the war, demanded; but even then it was doubtful whether Portugal could have resisted an offensive by any of its potential enemies.

If Telmo Faria is concerned with detailing meticulously Salazar's dealings with the army, one of the principal pillars of the New State, then Fernando Rosas, in his *Salazarismo e fomento económico*, has a similar aim, but in relation to the country's economic elites. This collection of essays brings together Rosas's writings on the subject of the different proposals for economic reform which competed against each other within the New State's outwardly complicated decision-making machinery.⁷ At the heart of this machinery stood, of course, Salazar; but like Faria, Rosas paints a picture of a dictator who had to move extremely slowly, considering any proposal for change of any description for as long as possible before making a decision. Salazar was constrained by the need to appease certain economic groups on which

⁷ One of these essays is available in English. Fernando Rosas, 'Salazar and economic development in the 1930s and 1940s: Industrialisation without agrarian reform', in António Costa Pinto, ed., *Modern Portugal* (Palo Alto: SPOSS, 1998), 88–101.

he depended for support, notably the southern landowners. This was despite the fact that the latifundias of the south had long been identified by Portuguese economic commentators as the most important reason for Portugal's economic backwardness. Over the course of the (sometimes repetitive) essays, Rosas explains clearly the background and make-up of a new class in Portuguese society, the technocratic 'engineers', who believed that they were destined to be the agents of Portugal's transformation into a modern country, and who, believing in the need for a strong state after sixteen years of instability under the Republic, flocked to serve Salazar.

Fernando Rosas breaks these reformers into two basic categories: those he describes as 'neophysiocrats', who argued that the transformation of Portugal must begin through the modernisation of agriculture, and the industrialists, who believed that Portugal could transform itself into a modern industrialised country without having first to address agricultural concerns. The first, heirs of an older school of thought which traced its roots to Oliveira Martins and which had included, for a time, Salazar himself, wanted to resolve the basic contradiction inherent in Portugal's land-holding arrangements: in the north were small plots which barely ensured the subsistence of their owners, and which had forced hundreds of thousands to emigrate to Brazil; in the south were the large and inefficient latifundias kept alive by an exploited landless labourer class which had no protection from the state against either the whims of employers or of nature. The break-up of the southern estates, and their transformation, through irrigation, into large family farms, was the neophysiocrats' goal: in social terms, the creation of a prosperous farming middle class, secure, grateful to the state, and with money to spend. Successful at times, and sufficiently powerful to have their proposed legislation accepted, the neophysiocrats always fell at the last hurdle. Implementation of the laws they inspired never occurred because Salazar, dependent on the support of the southern estate owners, did not allow it. As for the industrialists, theirs was an even more difficult task: the sudden industrialisation of the country, even if possible, would have untold social consequences which Salazar simply would not tolerate. The New State's rhetoric on the intrinsic value of rural life, amply supported by the landed interests of the South, made the industrialists' dream an impossibility.

If Faria makes it clear that Salazar cared little about the mechanics of national defence, and more about how the army could best be used to support the regime, then Rosas complements this picture by suggesting that the nation's economy (as opposed to its finances) was less important to Salazar than, as he put it, making Portugal 'live habitually'. Stability and order, to be guarded by the New State, were what, seemingly, mattered most to him. In the final essays Rosas illustrates vividly the consequences of the official insistence on rural values as the foundation of a modest but honourable way of life that was, unfortunately for Portugal, totally at odds with the reality of the country. The author examines standards of living in the north and south of the country to paint a picture of a misery completely out of step with the rest of western Europe (with the exception of post-Civil War Spain) and, what is more important, does so through official documentation, thus showing beyond any doubt that the regime's rhetoric about the moral and social virtues of an

agriculture-led economy was false. People across the countryside starved, or came close to starving; almost all their money was spent on food; education was nowhere a priority; and the government was aware of it all. This was the reality of the New State, and it was not surprising that during the Second World War, as the situation worsened, a wave of peasant risings spread across Portugal; in the south, these were often influenced by revolutionary political entities, and in the north, they were part of a defence of what can be called a ‘moral’ economy which the state was meant at the very least, to guarantee.

João Medina’s *Salazar, Hitler e Franco* is another collection of writings (which vary greatly in extent) and its name is somewhat misleading, since only the last two – very short – essays are dedicated to a comparison of the three dictators. Medina’s interest in this book is one of political typology: he hopes to classify the nature of Salazar’s thought and the principles of his regime, using official publications aimed at all kinds of audiences to trace how the New State explained itself. Medina believes that the traditional right in Portugal was strong enough to contain the more progressive forces which sought to rid the country of established privilege. In this way fascism, with its radical mass appeal, was never necessary in Portugal. Salazar insisted on being obeyed, but was merely the most successful in a long line of candidates for purveyor of authoritarian rule. Medina concludes that Salazar produced an original form of nationalism, different from its contemporaries in the rest of Europe, but one which subjected Portugal to one of the darkest period in its history.

The outcome of Medina’s investigations is the highlighting of the medieval nature of Salazar’s conception of society, with God as the ultimate source of power and authority, and with a rigid social structure below, ultimately tied to the land and its seasons. The emphasis on rural values reflected Salazar’s own social background, the village life to which he ostensibly returned whenever he could find time to leave Lisbon. This medievalism is surprising, considering Portugal’s maritime history and its substantial colonial empire – but Medina’s study concentrates on the New State the its peak of its authority, in the 1930s and 40s, when there was still no challenge to colonialism (although Portugal’s colonies were coveted by European rivals) and when the regime’s ideologists did not have to factor the defence of the colonies into their view of the ‘essential qualities’ of the Portuguese nation. Vast sums were spent in a poor country on the restoration of medieval buildings, to the detriment of later monuments (and of more pressing matters), in an effort to reawaken interest, and pride, in the medieval Portugal of the *Reconquista* and the virtues which the regime chose to associate with that period. For all his worldly power, however, Salazar could not make the real world fit in with his vision of an ideal society, and political compromises had to be made in order for him to remain in power, as we have already seen. Salazar might despise the Revolutionary tradition and its emphasis on the rights of the citizen, but his 1933 Constitution still reserved a place for the citizen in the election of the president (essential for the continued support of General Carmona) and – partly – in the election of the Assembleia Nacional.

Medina also attempts to trace – in order to further separate Salazar from fascism –

international reaction to the Portuguese dictator in the 1930s, his most fruitful decade in terms of foreign adulation. One Italian translator of Salazar's words was embarrassed by his criticism of the Fascist concept of the totalitarian state, with its inherent paganism and its embracing of violence. Such misguided criticism, Corrado Zoli explained, was due to the paucity of rigorous information in Lisbon concerning Fascism in theory and practice.⁸ Official uneasiness on both sides was clear in the attempt to publish a similar work in Germany in 1938,⁹ and it was in a French volume – *Comment on relève un Etat*¹⁰ – that Salazar's theoretical objections to Fascism were presented in their clearest fashion: so clearly, in fact, that the work was never published in Portugal.

That the New State's actual political arrangements were hollow is well known. Corporate organisations never developed autonomy from the state, and worked essentially as a collection of selfish interests ultimately concerned with stifling any competition. The regime's authority rested not on the wholesale allegiance of a grateful nation, but rather on the painful memory of the First Republic and, increasingly, on the threat of force. This force was initially that of the army, but was gradually handed over to the civilian agencies of which the *Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado* (later *Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado* and finally *Direcção Geral de Segurança*) was the most feared. Struggling to keep pace with a different world after the Second World War, Salazar agreed to change the face of the regime, but its repressive nature actually worsened. Medina claims not to know whether Salazar ever wondered about the corruption, violence and persecutions over which he was presiding. He cannot provide an answer to this question (which brings us back to the surprising lack of a biography of Salazar), but settles for the thought that Salazar probably accepted these problems as necessary evils – unpleasant side-effects of his greater task of making Portugal 'live habitually' – a task which by the 1960s, with the West in turmoil, three different wars to be fought in Africa, and mass emigration, was looking increasingly impossible.

What binds all of these works together – despite major disagreements, especially between Rosas and Medina on the classification of Salazarism – is that they make apparent the tentative nature and the fragility of all regimes in Portugal, from the Republic, at war with itself, with its domestic opponents and, for a time, with the world at large, to the New State, even at the pinnacle of its power and authority in the 1930s and 40s. Narrow elites – political, economic and cultural – fought fiercely to control what little they had, surrounded by a poor, illiterate and politically apathetic population, which was concerned essentially with its immediate survival while the country fell further and further behind the rest of Europe. That the Republic could not satisfy the demands of these elites is clear, as is the failure of the military to do so after 1926. Turmoil from 1918 to 1928 set the stage for Salazar's

⁸ António Ferro, *Salazar: Il Portogallo e il suo Capo* (Rome: Sindicato Italiano de Arti Grafiche, 1934), trans. Corrado Zoli.

⁹ *Portugal – Das werden eines neuen Staates – Reden und Dokumente* (Essen: Essener Verlagsanstalt, 1938).

¹⁰ (Paris: Flammarion, 1937).

authoritarian rule, which concentrated its attention on the country's financial life so that it might be allowed by the rest of the world to withdraw into itself, enforcing a paralysis which reinforced – deliberately – Portugal's backwardness and which left it as unprepared to deal with diplomatic, military and economic contingencies as it had ever been.