Land transport workers in Lisbon: state and company control and strikes (1870-1910)

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Abstract: Treated peripherally in the bibliography focused on the analysis of land transport in Lisbon, this article is specifically dedicated to the workers in the sector. The text covers the period from the 1870s, marked by profound changes in vehicle circulation with the introduction of the Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa, up until 1910, when the republican regime was established in Portugal, a moment of heightened mobilization among workers in the sector. Firstly, the analysis focuses on how, during this period, when the urban space itself was undergoing profound transformations, municipal and police control over coachmen and carters intensified. Subsequently, the article examines the collective transport companies and the attempts to exert control within them through regulations. Throughout the text, strikes are highlighted as key moments for analyzing the workers' experiences in the city, revealing working conditions, class conflicts, and forms of organization and mobilization. Thus, the strikes provide an opportunity to investigate the workers' possible interpretations of the control measures over their work and bodies, as well as the ways they found to resist.
Keywords: Land Transport; Lisbon; Workers; Strikes.

THE CAPITAL of Portugal, Lisbon, underwent significant transformations in the land transport sector throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Scholars who have analyzed the history of this aspect of the city have addressed various issues, such as the different vehicles that circulated through the streets, the relationship between transportation transformation and the urban growth of the capital, as well as the formation of companies dedicated to the sector and the disputes among them.[1]

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1 As an example, see: VIEIRA, Antonio Lopes. **Os transportes públicos de Lisboa entre 1830 e 1910**. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1982. MARTINS, Nuno Gonçalo Simões. **A Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa (1901-1926**). Política, rede de transportes e evolução urbana. 2018. Dissertação (Mestrado em História) – Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisboa, 2018.

Maria Amélia da Motta Capitão, in *Subsídios para a história dos transportes terrestres de Lisboa* (1974), referred to the Cordeiro brothers, founders of the Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa, as "illustrious and entrepreneurial Portuguese."[2] Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, in the "Preface" of *História da Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa em Portugal* (2006), indicated that the company provided a "beneficent service [...] to those who left their homes early in the morning." This author also stated that "transportation in Lisbon was a boon for those traveling from the outskirts of the capital, or on Sundays enjoyed the well-deserved commercial rest."[3] The Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa was indeed one of the main protagonists in the history of transportation in the city and, as of 2024, continues to monopolize a significant portion of this service. Moreover, Carris commissioned several works about its own history, such as the aforementioned *História da Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa em Portugal* and *Eléctricos de Lisboa: aventuras sobre carris* by Cristina Ferreira Gomes, published in 1994.[4]

Despite the variety of aspects covered in the bibliography on land transport in Lisbon, the workers involved in the sector have been treated peripherally, partly because they were not among the authors' objectives. The aim of this text is precisely to focus on the workers. The article covers the period from the 1870s, marked by profound changes in vehicle circulation with the introduction of the Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa, up until 1910, when the republican regime was established in Portugal, a moment of heightened mobilization among workers in the sector. Firstly, the analysis examines how, during this period, when the urban space itself was undergoing profound transformations, municipal and police control over coachmen and carters intensified. Subsequently, the article specifically examines the collective transport companies and the attempts to exert control within them through regulations.

Throughout the text, however, strikes are highlighted as key moments for analyzing the workers' experiences in the city, revealing working conditions, class conflicts, and forms of organization and mobilization.[5] Thus, the strikes provide an opportunity to investigate the workers' possible interpretations of the control measures over their work and bodies, as well as the strategies they developed to resist.

Labor, transportation and forms of control in Lisbon

DURING THE PERIOD analyzed, the city of Lisbon experienced rapid population growth. In 1864, the population was 199,056, while in 1911 it had reached 435,359,[6] representing an increase

2 CAPITÃO, Maria Amélia da Motta. **Subsídios para a história dos transportes terrestres de Lisboa**. Lisboa: Publ. Culturais da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 1974. p. 43

3 SERRÃO, Joaquim Veríssimo. Prefácio. *In*: **História da Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa em Portugal**. Lisboa: Companhias Carris de Ferro de Lisboa, 2006. p. 9.

4 The fact that they were funded by the company does not detract from the merit of these works, although it indicates a commitment to the company.

5 According to Michelle Perrot, "as a field of conflict, it [the strike] multiplies the relationships between classes and social groups, which we are accustomed to seeing separated into their own compartments." PERROT, Michelle. **Workers on strike**. France, 1871-1890. Nova Heaven/Londres: Yale University Press, 1987. pp. 4-5.

6 RODRIGUES, Tereza; FERREIRA, Oligário A. V. **As cidades de Lisboa e Porto na viragem do século XIX**

of 129%. This marked a reversal of the stagnation and regression that had existed until 1850, due to a negative migration balance.[7] The population growth corresponded to the expansion of the city's own surface area, which went from 1,208 hectares in 1852 to 8,244 hectares between 1895 and 1903.[8] Additionally, public investment in projects aimed at transforming the city's appearance is evident, including the construction of markets, the opening of streets, and the creation of parks, among other initiatives.[9]

In this context of population growth and urban expansion, transportation became a fundamental element as well as a driver of the expansion itself. In terms of public transportation, which will be discussed further, the Companhia de Carris de Ferro de Lisboa was established in the 1870s, although other companies were already providing the service. However, in Lisbon, in addition to private vehicles, there was also a rental car service. During this period, the vehicles were animal-drawn, such as sedans, carriages, and coaches.[10] For freight transport, the city relied on carts, both from companies that rented them out and from independent workers.

Regarding rental cars, Artur Teodoro Matos noted that, although the exact date when this service was established in Lisbon is unknown, a decree dated November 8, 1766, regulated such practice. However, it was in the following century that "several municipal decrees regulated their operation, both by setting prices and specifying the obligations of coachmen, and by designating areas where they were allowed to pick up passengers or even imposing travel directions on certain streets."[11]

The fact that they circulated in public spaces meant that the vehicles, and consequently the workers involved, were subject to constant regulation by the City Council and the police of Lisbon throughout the 19th century. A decree from the City Council dated October 6, 1829, for example, stated that people driving ox-drawn carts should always walk in front of the oxen and never on top of the carts. The penalty was 2,000 réis and eight days in prison, which would double in the case of a second offense.[12]

A decree from the Lisbon City Council dated April 21, 1837, stipulated that the owners of all vehicles in Lisbon were required to register their names in a ledger, obtain a license, and affix a plate to their vehicles. Those who violated the regulation would be fined 4,000

– Características da sua evolução demográfica: 1864-1930. Congresso O Porto de Fim do Século 1880-1910, 1991, p. 301.

7 PINHEIRO, Magda. **Cidade e caminhos-de-ferro**. Lisboa: CEHCP - Centro de Estudos de História Contemporânea Portuguesa/ISCTE, 2008. p. 11.

8 RAPOSO, Raquel. O "Negócio": marketing e prostituição feminina em Lisboa no início do século XX. **Revista Trilhas da História**, v. 8, n. 15, pp. 221-236, 2018, p. 245.

9 SILVA, Álvaro Ferreira da; MATOS, Ana Cardoso de. Urbanismo e modernização das cidades: O "embelezamento" como ideal, Lisboa, 1858-1891. **Scripta Nova**. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, v. 30, n. 69, [s/p], 2000.

10 RICARDI, Alexandre. Da tração animal aos carros invisivelmente propelidos: o transporte público em Lisboa,1834-1910 - parte I, o tempo das bisarmas (1834-1873). **Faces da História**, v. 8, n. 2, p. 101-120, 2021, p. 108.

11 MATOS, Artur Teodoro. **Transportes e comunicações em Portugal, Açores e Madeira (1750-1850)**. Ponta Delgada: Universidade dos Açores, 1980, p. 395.

12 CAPITÃO, op. cit., p. 204.

réis. The same decree stated that, given "the notorious excessive cruelty with which some drivers treat animals, a fine of 4,000 réis is imposed on those found to be guilty of such a barbaric act."[13] A regulation dated April 18, 1850, prohibited drivers of carts and carriages from "dropping their loads onto the sidewalks, as they could only unload by hand." Municipal regulations also specified the streets on which the vehicles could circulate, such as on Cais do Sodré.[14]

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, and especially from 1880 onward, it is evident that the measures implemented by the City Council and the police of Lisbon were not solely aimed at regulating vehicle traffic on the streets. Increasingly, these measures were focused on controlling the workers involved in the sector. This control is related to a characteristic of the transport profession. As Anton Rosenthal noted, coachmen and carters had more physical mobility than any other group of industrial workers.[15] In this sense, the ordinances and regulations emerged as instruments to control these workers, who, by the nature of their profession, moved through urban spaces, not only becoming intimately familiar with the city but also constantly interacting with its inhabitants.

This phenomenon, observed in other cities around the world during the same period, was noted by Maria João Vaz, who pointed out that "part of the working population of Lisbon aroused fears and was associated with dangerous elements, linked to crime, and the cause of persistent feelings of insecurity and unrest."[16] Maintaining public order and security within the city became a priority. In analyzing the statistical data collected between 1886 and 1892 by the Lisbon Civil Police, Vaz indicated that the category of coachmen and carters ranked just behind the general category of "workers" in terms of the number of detentions, even reaching the top spot in 1891.[17]

Vaz further explained that "many of the crimes and offenses identified at the time were largely related" to the work of coachmen and carters, "such as 'mistreatment of animals,' 'traveling at more than a regular trot,' among others." The author also noted that many of the detentions, such as those caused by bodily harm and offenses against public morals, were related to conflicts arising from their work activities or disputes among colleagues in the same profession. However, it was primarily due to traffic-related issues that this category of workers gained a prominent place among those detained in Lisbon.[18]

The Commissioner-General of the Lisbon police issued a directive in November 1884 outlining a series of situations in which the police force should act with full effectiveness. One of these situations specifically involved "the municipal ordinances on the mistreatment

13 Ibidem, p. 207.
14 Ibidem, p. 213.
15 ROSENTHAL, Anton. Streetcar Workers and the Transformation of Montevideo: The General Strike of May 1911. **The Americas**, v. 51, n. 4, p. 471-494, 1995, p. 479.
16 VAZ, Maria João. Crime e Sociedade. Lisboa, c. 1867-1910. *In*: POLÓNIA, Amélia et al. (org.). **Não nos deixemos petrificar**. Reflexões no Centenário do Nascimento de Victor de Sá. Porto: CITCEM - U. Porto, 2021. p. 50.
17 Ibidem, p. 58.
18 Ibidem.

of animals, placing coachmen and carters under special surveillance, 'exercising the utmost rigor with both, within the bounds of legality.'"[19] In 1890, according to Gonçalo Gonçalves, the Commissioner-General explained how the police should carry out arrests or impose fines on drivers of loaded vehicles (including those with passengers):

> when an arrest or fine is necessary for a coachman transporting passengers to any point in this city, it should not be done until the passengers have reached their intended destination. In such cases, the police officer will ride on the driver's seat of the carriage, after informing the passengers that this is done to avoid inconvenience to them while ensuring that the coachman who committed the offense does not go unpunished.[20]

In recounting the cases of the coachman known as "Zé Lagarto" in early 20th-century Lisbon, his nephew Joaquim de Oliveira indicated that during his uncle's time, it was forbidden to trot or gallop within the city. Those who attempted it would "promptly be whistled down by the police, resulting in a fine and sometimes even imprisonment." In relation to the above police order, Zé Lagarto was fined by the police while carrying passengers. He then said he would go to the Civil Government to pay the fine but would first drop off the passengers at their destination. The police officer agreed and sat beside him. However, on the return trip, now without passengers, "taking advantage of a curve, Zé Lagarto pulled the reins, the animals broke into a gallop, and the police officer was thrown off the seat."[21]

Municipal ordinances aimed at controlling the work of coachmen and carters, as well as the police efforts to enforce them, were intensified from 1880 onwards, making this category a primary target for detentions during the period. It was precisely a decree from the City Council that was at the center of the first strike organized by them. On July 3, 1882, the carters of rental carts went on strike due to a City Council ordinance that prohibited them from driving their vehicles from the driver's seat, a privilege granted to those with private carts and carts from manufacturing and industrial establishments.[22] The City Council then made available for commercial use, and for the usual fee, the carts that were in the sanitation department. Additionally, it instructed the civil governor to order the removal of "the guides and seat boards from all carts, whose carters, due to the ordinance, are not allowed to drive in such a manner."[23]

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19 GONÇALVES, Gonçalo Rocha. Chamem a polícia? As ruas da cidade e a governamentalidade policial em Lisboa, c.1870-1910. **Revista Brasileira de História**, v. 43, n. 94, 2023, p. 355.

20 Ibidem, p. 362.

21 CAPITÃO, op. cit., p. 124.

22 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 3, 4 jul. 1882. The present research was primarily conducted using the periodical *O Século*. It was established in 1880, and according to Priscila de Oliveira and Leandro Gonçalves, "with the support of an elite of journalists and intellectuals associated with the Republican cause in Portugal," the newspaper "quickly achieved success in sales and popularity." At the turn of the century, "the journal underwent a process of dynamization, with the formation of a network of correspondent journalists, as well as the introduction of new supplements, special editions and other publications". OLIVEIRA, Priscila de; GONÇALVES, Leandro. Martinho Nobre de Melo e a União dos Interesses Económicos: a defesa da representação profissional no jornal *O Século*. **Historiae,** v. 7, n. 2, p. 9-28, 2016, p. 11. José Tengarrinha noted that *O Século* was among the leading newspapers in Lisbon at the turn of the century, alongside *Diário de Notícias* and *Jornal do Comércio*. TENGARRINHA, José. A imprensa *In:* **Lisboa nos princípios do século:** aspectos da sua vida e fisionomia na colecção de postais ilustrados da Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa: exposição. Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, 1977. p. 55.

23 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 3, 8 jul. 1882.

According to the newspaper *O Século*, the police's actions were a significant issue for the workers, as there were "coachmen who on the same day suffered two or three fines."[24] The paper complained that fines should not be a mere whim of a police officer, who in many cases was ignorant, and often bilious and aggressively persecuting the coachmen. This was because, while there were coachmen who abused their position, the number of those who did not was much larger, and they were at the mercy of a police officer.[25] As previously mentioned, coachmen and carters were among those most frequently targeted by the police.

The strike began on June 4th, and according to *O Século*, "the adherence was widespread."[26] The same newspaper reported that some media outlets were attempting to discredit the coachmen's protest by publishing false complaints about them or claiming that their demands were unclear. *O Século*, however, clarified that the workers' demands were clearly stated in the petition submitted to the City Council, which responded as usual by "burying the petition in some random committee."[27]

The petition submitted by the coachmen included demands such as allowing "hackney carriages to move through the streets at a walking pace or regular trot when necessary."[28] Regarding the police, the document requested that the civil governor be instructed to ensure that the police adopt a more moderate approach "when imposing fines for carriages operating at a trot or gallop." It was also stated that the coachman should have the right "to call witnesses when he believes the citation is unjust." Among the requests, it was stated that when a coachman was cited for a violation, the police should issue the notice at the same time and place where the infraction occurred, without the officer having "the right to detain the vehicle or seize the registration plate."[29] Therefore, the point of contention was not just the City Council's regulations, but primarily the way the police enforced these measures. The workers used the strike as a means to denounce the abuses committed.

On June 7, 1890, a committee of hackney carriage owners approached two councilors, who "responded that they were studying the best way to amend the single article of the decree of May 12, to make the fines effective without revoking the coachmen's licenses."[30] The councilors also stated that they would only make the amendment if the strike ended. The same committee that went to the City Council also went to the police headquarters, where they were promised that, until the City Council resolved the issue, the police service would be more moderate. In light of the responses from the police headquarters and the president of the administrative committee, the coachmen began to return to work.

24 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 5 jun. 1890.
25 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 5 jun. 1890.
26 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 6 jun. 1890.
27 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 7 jun. 1890.
28 Hackney carriages referred to horse-drawn carriages, such as tilburies, that provided transportation services for a set fare.
29 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 8 jun. 1890.
30 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 7 jun. 1890.

The forms of control exercised by the City Council and the police in Lisbon involved issues such as the treatment of animals, the speed of travel, and the regulation of street routes. However, the attempt at control extended further and could involve the workers' appearance itself. The *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro*, a periodical aimed at railway owners, reported in its February 1, 1902 edition that the City Council had already issued "a decree for the coachmen's uniforms, but they managed to delay its implementation by claiming that the tailors could not have the uniforms ready by the set date. Since then, it has been perhaps ten years (!), and the tailors still have not completed them!"[31]

The *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro* also indicated that, in addition to Lisbon having the worst and most expensive hackney carriage service, the vehicles were decrepit. The coachmen, in turn, were described as "dirty, ragged, wearing various colors, unshaven, with a bowler hat or a drooping one, a blanket or a tattered coverlet, which had never seen a wash on the cushion, just as the coachman had never known what courtesy or civility was, at least." The newspaper suggested that conditions should be imposed for coachmen to practice their trade, stating that 'they should not be allowed to take the reins without being clean, shaved, and in uniform."[32] According to the *Gazeta*, the uniform should consist of a long dark coat, a tall hat, gloves, and a white cotton cravat.

The uniforms required for the workers were to be paid for by the workers themselves, who were already covering fines and damages to the vehicle. The fact that they had to pay for a range of items, as well as receiving a low salary, was the motivation behind the strike declared by the carters on October 25, 1890, a few months after the strike by the coachmen. According to *O Século*, the workers claimed that, in addition to candles for the lanterns, some companies deducted 10 réis for the payment of the water for the horses, and in some establishments, another deduction was made to help pay for the night watchman of the stable. A striker interviewed by the newspaper reportedly said that, among other forms of exploitation inflicted by employers, there was one particular businessman who required "the workers to eat at a tavern he owns, deducting from their wages the expenses they incur during the week."[33]

The requirement to purchase uniforms and eat at places specified by the employers are examples of how the employer-employee relationship extended beyond the mere exchange of money for labor, and occurred in other locations, such as Rio de Janeiro.[34] These cases illustrate Marcel van der Linden's assertion that there were "possible ties between both parties outside the circulation process," with employers having various ways to economically bind their employees.[35]

31 **Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro**, Lisboa, p. 35, 1 fev. 1902.
32 **Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro**, Lisboa, p. 35, 1 fev. 1902.
33 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 25 out. 1890.
34 TERRA, Paulo Cruz. **Cidadania e trabalho**: cocheiros e carroceiros no Rio de Janeiro (1870-1906). Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro/Arquivo Geral da Cidade, 2013.
35 LINDEN, Marcel van der. Rumo a uma nova conceituação histórica da classe trabalhadora mundial. **História**,

The complaint about having to pay for the candles was still an issue for the cart drivers in 1910 and was one of the demands in the strike that erupted on October 24 of that year. Numbering 3,000, the workers demanded to receive 700 réis per day, 300 réis for the helpers,[36] and that the costs for water, lanterns, and candle stubs be covered by the cart owners. Once the strike was declared, workers' committees were formed to monitor and prevent vehicles from leaving. The strikers went to Alfândega, Santa Apolónia, and Rossio station to block the passage of handcarts and also prevented carts carrying pine for bakeries from passing. After deliberation by the workers, the transportation of vegetables and meat to the markets, as well as bread to hospitals and asylums, was permitted.[37]

The attempt to prevent the movement of vehicles intensified as the strike progressed. At Cruz das Almas, strikers allegedly stabbed a cart driver who refused to join the strike.[38] Meanwhile, merchant Manuel da Costa, who went to retrieve a cart, was warned by Joaquim Serra that the cart drivers were on strike and therefore should return the vehicle. Since the merchant did not heed the warning, Serra struck him with a razor on the arm.[39] The act of blocking vehicle circulation was also common in strikes by workers in Rio de Janeiro and can be understood by the fact that cart drivers were easily replaceable, even though they had some degree of specialization, as they needed to know how to handle the vehicles and obtain a license for that.

The strike in Lisbon had a significant impact on the city's operations, halting both commerce and construction. On the Tagus, some steamers, and frigates with coal for the for the power plant were not unloaded because the dockworkers sided with the carters.[40]

The carters formed a committee that negotiated with the vehicle owners' representatives, with the civil governor acting as an intermediary. Initially, the employers agreed to all the complaints except for the salary increase. The workers then decided to remain on strike. The owners made a new proposal, in which they agreed to the workers' demands, including a commitment not to retaliate against those who participated in the strike. The workers chose to end the strike, with the exception of the employees of cart owner João Luiz de Sousa, who refused to adhere to the terms of the agreement.[41] Another significant consequence of this strike was the formation of the carters' association, which, at its first meeting, discussed the favorable outcome of the strike for the workers, although some carters complained about the failure of certain employers to fulfill the agreed terms.[42] The strike also led to a greater organization among vehicle owners, who reorganized their professional association, which now had 800 members.[43]

24, n. 2, p. 11-40, 2005, p. 24.

36 *Sotas* are the workers who drove the vehicles mounted on the animals.

37 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 25 out. 1910.

38 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 26 out. 1910.

39 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 25 out. 1910.

40 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 25 out. 1910.

41 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 4, 27 out. 1910.

42 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 5, 31 out. 1910.

43 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 4, 27 out. 1910.

The failure to adhere to the agreement established during the October strike led carters working at a cart stable to declare another strike in November 1910.[44]

During the period covered in this article, from 1870 to 1910, the city of Lisbon underwent a process of population growth and urbanization aimed at aligning it with the standards of other European capitals.[45] In this context, the coachmen and carters, by circulating daily throughout the city, became a significant target for municipal regulations and police supervision. However, the workers had their own interpretations and expectations regarding the control measures implemented by the municipality and the police, and they sought to express these through strikes and petitions. The fact that transport workers were subject to extensive regulations and that these measures were a significant catalyst for their actions was not unique to Lisbon but occurred in other contexts as well. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, for example, out of the total of 22 strikes conducted by transport workers between 1870 and 1906, five (22.7%) were primarily motivated by federal and municipal laws, as well as police regulations. Of the three major strikes (in 1890, 1900, and 1906), which involved the largest number of workers, two (66.66%) were linked to laws and regulations.[46] Following this, I will analyze the workers in public transportation companies in Lisbon.

Carris de Ferro, regulations and strikes

In terms of public transportation in Lisbon, the first company was the *Companhia de Omnibus*, established in 1834.[47] Over time, issues such as delays, the poor condition of the carriages, and the state of the animals led to the first public protests. In addition to user complaints, a shareholders' meeting revealed poor management, and the company eventually ceased operations in 1865.[48] In 1864, the first routes of Florindo began to operate. According to Vasco Callixto, "the public liked these cars, the coachmen gained fame for their skill and affability, becoming known by the names given to them by the passengers. One was João Cara de Pelo, another was Papa-Leite, and yet another was Perninha."[49] In 1870, the Larmanjat system was inaugurated, a type of rail system or tram. The irregularity of this railway system and the jolts passengers experienced along the route generated significant dislike among users.[50] It ceased operations in 1877, following a decision by the shareholders who were weary of the losses and suspicious of the possibility of fraud.[51]

44 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 3, 27 nov. 1910.
45 SILVA; MATOS, op. cit.
46 TERRA, op. cit.
47 The *omnibus* mentioned refers to a type of public transportation powered by animal traction.
48 CALLIXTO, op. cit., p. 24.
49 Ibidem, p. 25-26.
50 Ibidem, p. 33.
51 GOMES, Cristina Ferreira. **Eléctricos de Lisboa**: aventuras sobre carris. Lisboa: Gradiva, 1994. p. 18.

Regarding the tramway lines, or railways, between 1870 and 1872, 13 requests were submitted to the City Council by those interested in the business.[52] The proposal that ultimately succeeded was from the Cordeiro brothers, Luciano and Francisco, with the latter being the chancellor of the U.S. Consulate in Rio de Janeiro. An important detail about the establishment of Carris is that, in 1871, all concessions, licenses, and authorizations obtained by the Cordeiro brothers were transferred to a group of capitalists based in Brazil. Antonio Lopes Vieira explained that the establishment of Carris in Brazil can be attributed to the importance of the Portuguese colony in the country, as well as the types of economic relationships between the two countries.[53] Factors influencing this included the availability of investment capital, the connection of Portuguese immigrants in Brazil to their homeland, and the awareness of the success of a new mode of transportation in a city like Rio, where several rail transport companies were already in operation.[54]

The Carris streetcars, known as “American” cars, began operating in 1873, and the company’s history is marked by a continuous effort to establish a monopoly in the city’s land transport. The battles of Carris were fought not only against companies that also aimed to implement the rail system but also against other enterprises that provided passenger transport throughout the streets of Lisbon. In this context, Vieira explained that the “relationships between the shareholders and directors of Carris, on one hand, and the City Council, on the other, would prove to be a decisive factor in eliminating the omnibus companies and in the progressive monopolization of the transport sector.”[55]

Among the companies existing at the end of the 19th century, two were organized by former employees of Carris. Eduardo Jorge, nicknamed “Chora,” was born into a poor family and, in 1878, began working as a stable boy at Carris. In 1888, he founded his own transportation company, and the first “Chora” carriage appeared in Lisbon. Starting with a single vehicle, by the turn of the century there were already 24.[56] According to Gomes, the Chora carriages were admired by the public, who had begun to criticize the American carriages for their unscrupulous staff.[57]

The Lusitana was founded in 1896 by 24 conductors and coachmen dismissed from Carris and was named “A Lusitana, Sociedade Cooperativa dos Condutores e Cocheiros da Viação Lisbonense.”[58] Gomes noted that its formation was based on “socialist ideals, which were spreading among the working class at the end of the century.”[59] Callixto pointed out that the company was well-regarded by the public not only for its lower fares but also

52 SANDE E CASTRO, Antonio Paes de. **A Carris e a expansão de Lisboa**: subsídios para a história dos transportes colectivos na cidade de Lisboa. Lisboa: Mimeo, 1956. p. 11.
53 VIEIRA, op. cit., p. 109.
54 Ibidem, p. 110.
55 Ibidem, p. 89.
56 CALLIXTO, op. cit., p. 76-77.
57 GOMES, op. cit., p. 35.
58 CALLIXTO, op. cit., p. 91.
59 GOMES, op. cit., p. 35.

for introducing a unique type of ticket, which could be collected and entailed gifts from the Caldas pottery store.[60]

Faced with competition that affected Carris's business, lowering prices or other free-market measures were not sufficient, and the company resorted to leveraging its connection with local authorities. In 1890, a regulation was enacted prohibiting vehicles from other companies from stopping on the tracks of the American cars. *O Protesto Operário*, commenting on the regulation, stated that the small transportation industry was going to be wiped out. It fought "against a power that possesses superior resources, including an abundance of capital, machinery, and protection from the established authorities."[61] Alongside capital, it faced everything: "almost the entire daily press, the police force, the codes, and the regulations."[62] Thus, there was the official monopoly, the "victory of capital."

In 1898, a new contract was established between Carris and the City Council, which discussed the exploitation of electric traction. Concurrently with the contract, a regulation was enacted requiring other companies to pay 500,000 réis annually per vehicle. Capitão stated that, while before the 1898 contract there was a virtual monopoly held by Carris, from that point on the exclusivity became complete.[63]

The contract granted by the City Council sparked a wave of protests from Lusitana and the Socialist Municipal Board. In 1898, a rally was held, attended by representatives from the newspapers *O Século*, *Vanguarda*, and *Lanterna*. The speakers denounced the City Council for attempting to rescue a failing company. A motion was made to be delivered to the Ministry of the Kingdom, asserting that the contract would ruin the Lusitana, a company "created by the people of the capital to defend the interests of the public and save from misery hundreds of families of honest workers, brutally cast out by the powerful Company."[64] Similar criticism was voiced by *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro* on February 1, 1902, which revealed that the tax imposed by the City Council on other companies was established precisely "to alleviate the expenses of the Carris company, which is yet another greater corruption."[65]

Electric trams began operating in Lisbon on August 31, 1901. On one hand, this solidified the position of Carris, as the number of passengers increased by 337.45% between 1901 and 1910.[66] On the other hand, it significantly impacted many companies that provided street transport in Lisbon. According to the *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro*, in its February 1, 1902 edition, newspapers reported that since the start of the electric tram service, 15 hackney carriage companies had gone bankrupt. The newspaper assessed this claim as

60 CALLIXTO, op. cit., p. 93.
61 **O Protesto Operário**, Lisboa, p. 1, 6 jul. 1890.
62 **O Protesto Operário**, Lisboa, p. 1, 13 jul. 1890.
63 CAPITÃO, op. cit., p. 77.
64 MARTINS, op. cit., p. 62.
65 **Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro**, Lisboa, p. 34, 1 fev. 1902.
66 VIEIRA, op. cit., p. 205.

somewhat exaggerated. Lusitana ceased its service in 1902, leaving only Chora's cars in operation, which continued to challenge Carris's dominance for another 16 years.[67]

Regarding the daily work at Carris, an important element is the regulation instituted by the company. Company regulations were not limited to the transportation sector and "were increasingly extensive sets of rules and norms, which included everything from moral prescriptions for workers to details on wages, fines and penalties, suspensions, and the management of tensions."[68]

In reviewing the regulations of the Companhia Carris de Ferro Lisboa between 1877 and 1904, one item that consistently appears in all the documents is:

> All employees of the Company must maintain the utmost seriousness in demeanor, manners, and actions while on duty, unwavering prudence and courtesy, scrupulous adherence to regulations and orders from their superiors, and complete dedication to the interests and good reputation of the Company.[69]

The document, along with the entire system of supervision and fines associated with it, aimed to instill in employees a model of authority and hierarchy. The company's regulations thus outlined various rules for the conduct of employees. Behaviors such as "drunkenness, relaxed standards of conduct, attire, loudness, disturbances, incitement to vandalism, and collective demonstrations, whether in service or within the company's premises, buildings, and vehicles,"[70] were prohibited and punishable by expulsion. As Michele Perrot indicated, the regulations had, in addition to their economic purpose, the intention of disciplining the worker's body, behavior, and gestures.[71]

Over time, the regulations of Carris began to include new prohibitions on employee behavior, indicating an attempt to expand the forms of control. In the 1904 document, for example, the "*guarda-freios*"—known as motor drivers in Portugal—were prohibited from speaking "while on duty, except to answer questions posed by superior employees."[72]

In a 1910 manifesto, the employees of Carris commented on the prohibition against conversing with passengers. The workers questioned that if a passenger asked the conductor a question and he did not respond, the passenger would be "entitled to call him rude." Thus, the worker had to "be rude to the passengers, due to the orders he receives."[73] According to the employees' discourse, therefore, a measure that sought to constrain their work could simultaneously damage the public's perception of the company itself.

67 **Gazeta dos caminhos de ferro**, Lisboa, p. 35, 1 fev. 1902
68 SOUZA, Robério Santos. Organização e disciplina do trabalho ferroviário baiano no pós-abolição. **Revista Mundos do Trabalho**, v. 2, n. 3, p. 76-98, 2010, p. 76.
69 Museu da Carris, Centro de documentação, Lisboa, **Regulamento da circulação dos carros da companhia carris de ferro de Lisboa**, 1877, p. 9.
70 Museu da Carris, Centro de documentação, Lisboa, **Regulamento da circulação dos carros da companhia carris de ferro de Lisboa**, 1877, p. 9.
71 PERROT, Michelle. **Workers on strike**: France, 1871-1890. Nova Heaven/Londres: Yale University Press, 1987.
72 Museu da Carris, Centro de documentação, Lisboa, **Regulamento da circulação dos carros da Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa**, 1914, p. 18.
73 **O Sindicalista**, Lisboa, p. 5, 18 dez. 1910.

In the same manifesto, the Carris employees stated that, despite being the ones who most "contributed to the company's interests," they were precisely "the ones most persecuted and most sacrificed." They also commented on various issues present in the regulations, such as the fact that a conductor or driver was not allowed to smoke when off duty. If "he is a driver, it is a 200 réis fine; if he is a "*guarda-freio*", he gets one day suspended." The driver was also punished for a passenger not having a ticket or for traveling beyond the designated zone, or "for stopping the car to take care of any bodily needs, even if it is just to drink water." The "*guarda-freio*", in turn, was punished "for taking a turn too quickly, or for not performing the counting as prescribed by the regulations."[74]

Regarding the strikes by land transport workers in Lisbon, the highest concentration occurred specifically in the mobilizations organized by the employees of Carris. What partly explains this is that it was the company that employed the largest number of workers and was also the one that practically monopolized public transport services from 1901 onwards.

The first strike by Carris employees occurred in 1892 and was against the change in the payment method, which was previously based on the day worked and was switched to hourly wages. In a manifesto, the employees stated that "payment by the hour, setting the rate at 60 réis for the coachman and 30 réis for the conductor, amounts to a reduction in wages that is incompatible with the current cost of living and housing."[75] José Tengarrinha noted that the major crisis of 1890-1892 exacerbated the rise in the cost of living and was related to the increase in strikes during that period.[76]

The change in the payment method also displeased transportation workers from other locations. In July 1900, the employees of the Companhia São Christovão in Rio de Janeiro went on strike because their wages, which were previously paid daily, were now being calculated based on the amount of time worked. According to the *Gazeta de Notícias*, this "did not please most of the coachmen, who found themselves subjected to 100 réis per hour, with some receiving more and others less according to the table."[77]

In the case of the strike by Carris employees, it is noted that on May 7, 1892, a movement leader from Carris instructed the employees to appoint a committee to negotiate with the company's management "to establish hourly payment for their work."[78] According to *O Século*, the invitation was poorly received because the employees believed the issue had already been resolved. The workers convened and formed a committee to inform the management that the new wage scale was not accepted because it would result in reduced earnings.[79]

74 **O Sindicalista**, Lisboa, p. 5, 18 dez. 1910.
75 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 1, 25 out. 1890.
76 TENGARRINHA, José. As greves em Portugal: uma perspectiva histórica do século XVIII a 1920. **Análise Social,** v. 17, n. 67-68, p. 573-601, 1981, p. 594.
77 **Gazeta de Notícias**, Rio de Janeiro, p. 1, 16 jul. 1900.
78 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 9 maio 1892.
79 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 9 maio 1892.

At four o'clock in the morning on May 8, 1892, the committee appointed by the workers declared that the staff would not work until the management guaranteed the wages prior to the new scale. The strike had an effect, and on the same day, the company's management met with the representatives of the strikers. The management representatives stated that they would abandon the new payment scale and maintain the old wages, "allowing the strikers to return to work immediately."[80] The workers, however, demanded that the management's declaration be put in writing, which was not accepted.

According to the strikers, the strike initially saw near-universal participation. On the second day of the strike, there were 249 strikers, while 11 workers had returned to their duties. On the same day, a committee attempted to speak with the management but was not received. A few hours later, the management decided to dismiss the workers who had remained on strike. Thus, the strike ended on May 10, 1892, and the workers claimed that about 150 men had been left unemployed.[81]

The next strike by the company's workers occurred only in October 1910. The fall of the Monarchy and the establishment of the Republic in Portugal in the same month, according to Vasco Pulido Valente, gave rise among the working classes to the hope that the new regime would bring a swift improvement in their standard of living. This hope, "along with the political experience that the working classes had accumulated during the struggle against the Monarchy, led to an extraordinary resurgence of the labor movement and a general intensification of labor conflicts."[82] The number of strikes increased significantly, with 17 work stoppages occurring in the country in 1909, and 19 in the first nine months of 1910. In the last 20 days of October 1910 alone, 21 strikes were organized, increasing to 48 in November and 26 in December of the same year.[83]

On October 6, 1910, two days after the Proclamation of the Republic, a large group of conductors and "*guarda-freios*" from Carris, approximately 800, "uniformed and carrying the banner of their association and republican standards," paraded "through the streets of the capital, shouting cheers for the new regime, the army, and the homeland."[84] The group passed by the editorial office of the newspaper *O Século* and declared that the company's management had intended to put the cars back on the streets the previous day. The workers, however, opposed this and stated that they would only return to their positions once the provisional government authorized it, provided that the management committed to a daily wage of 800 réis and an 8-hour workday.

Thus, the strike served both as a demonstration of support for the new political regime and as an opportunity for the workers to make demands regarding wages and working hours.

80 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 9 maio 1892.
81 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 11 maio 1892.
82 VALENTE, Vasco Pulido. A República e as classes trabalhadoras (Outubro de 1910 - Agosto de 1911). **Análise Social**, v. 9, n. 34, p. 293-316, 1972, p. 294.
83 Ibidem, p. 299
84 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 4, 7 out. 1910.

The directors of Carris, in turn, committed to meeting the employees' demands, and the cars resumed operation the following day.

On October 18, employees of the Transport Company went on strike due to a "misinterpretation of a service order from the management[...]," although the newspaper *O Século* did not specify what the order in question was. The strike interrupted the postal service from the Avenida station to the postal office. The company's director, Joaquim Falcão, spent the entire night taking measures, "ensuring that the mailbags were delivered to the respective office by 7 a.m. yesterday and that by 10 a.m. all strikers would return to their positions."[85] The director promised that no striker would be dismissed.

On November 14, a strike began among the employees of Carris, which saw participation from workers across various departments. In addition to the conductors and "*guarda-freios*", the strike also involved inspectors, office employees, dispatchers, stokers, and assistants. There were specific demands for different positions, although a common request among them was for an eight-hour workday. The workers negotiated with the company through the mediation of the Minister of the Interior, and after four days of strike, an arbitration ruling was issued that accepted almost all of the workers' demands.[86]

Final considerations

THE PRESENT TEXT addressed the period of intense changes in land transportation in Lisbon between 1870 and 1910 and sought to demonstrate that, in addition to the aspects already covered by the literature on the subject—such as types of vehicles, the relationship with urban growth, or the companies—it is also crucial to include the workers involved in the sector.

The strikes of land transportation workers are crucial keys to interpreting the daily work environment and oppression. Carlos da Fonseca presented a list of workers' strikes in Portugal and identified four demonstrations by land transportation workers in Lisbon between 1870 and 1910. However, this research identified a total of nine strikes, for which efforts were made, whenever possible, to elucidate the motivations and developments.

On the one hand, the strikes help to understand how, in the context discussed here, characterized by population growth, and attempts to transform urban space, the forms of control intensified by the City Council, the police, and the companies themselves through extensive regulations. On the other hand, the strikes highlight the strategies employed by workers to deal with these attempts at control by the public authorities and the companies. The strikes also became crucial mechanisms for achieving improvements in working conditions, which included wage increases, reduced working hours, and requests for relief from obligations such as purchasing candle stubs and water for the animals. The strikes

85 **O Século**, Lisboa, p. 2, 19 out. 1910.
86 **O Século**, Lisboa, 16 a 19 nov. 1910.

also contributed to the formation of associations established by workers during the specified time period. The impacts of the strikes by this category of workers in Lisbon also help to understand their importance for the city's operation, given that they directly affected the circulation of goods and people.

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