

Manuel Vieira Tomé

(Tomar, 1887 – Lisbon, April, 1934)

Manuel Vieira Tomé, son of Perpétua Jesus Oliveira Tomé and Manuel Vieira Tomé, was born in 1887, in Tomar. An office employee of the Portuguese Railways, trade union activist and militant of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), he participated in several revolutionary actions and was one of the first opponents of the Military Dictatorship and the Estado Novo to die under torture.

A member of the “revolutionary committee” and the Commission of Staff Improvements of the C. P., he was identified, in 1920, as “one of the main railway unionists” and “was regarded as the greatest agitator of the railway strike”, actively participating in the fight for the “improvement of the situation for his class”.

On 15 March 1928, by “superior order”, he was arrested and handed over to the intelligence police of the Ministry of the Interior (PIMI). Accused of being involved in the so-called “Entroncamento plot”, he was arrested on April 1 and released on 8 July 1928. A leader of the Railway Workers’ Union of Lisbon and the director of its newspaper Ferroviário, he was arrested again on 30 September 1930, “for being a dangerous agitator and for being a member of a commission charged with carrying out a transport workers' congress, knowing full well that this congress intended to prepare a general strike of all land and sea means of transport”. He was released on 7 May 1931, after the proposal to settle him in the Azores was not put into effect.

The political struggle against the dictatorship intensified in 1932, particularly in trade union intervention and the establishment of links with communist elements such as Alberto Matias, José Sequeira Valentim and Manuel Alpedrinha. His political activity earned him the persecution of the Political Police that linked him to conspiratorial meetings with Artur Guilherme Rodrigues Cohen, Carlos Filipe Rodrigues Consiglieri, the former captain César de Almeida, João Antunes, João Lopes Soares, Manuel Jacinto and Roque Laia, among others.

He was arrested for the last time on 16 April 1934, following his essential role in the revolutionary movement of 18 January 1934, being one of the individuals responsible for the derailment of a train in Póvoa de Santa Iria and establishing the connection with Coimbra through the railway employee António Afonso Pereira.

Incarcerated in the Aljube Prison, in Lisbon, he was tortured to death. He was 47 years old. Days after arriving at the Aljube, he was found dead in his cell. His body was utterly bruised from the police beatings. According to the police version, “he committed suicide by hanging in the Prison of Aljube, using a blanket that was given to him, which he tore into strips” or the belt of his pants. However, the diary of the also political prisoner António Gato Pinto reports that Manuel Vieira Tomé did not resist torture. They inflicted burns and electric shocks with the so-called “electric helmet”, his fingernails were torn off, and some of his bones and fingers were broken.