How to rule a small town in early Twentieth Century Portugal

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Introduction

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the municipality of Setúbal, located around forty kilometres south of Lisbon, was experiencing one of the highest demographic growth rates in Portugal. Between 1890 and 1911, the number of inhabitants in its main urban nucleus - the town of Setúbal – grew from 17,581 to 30,346, representing an increase of 70%. No other area in the country, not even Lisbon or Oporto, the cities with the highest increase, had such a rate of population growth. This development was linked to the rapid integration of the fishing activity in the factories that were beginning to set up in the region. This was due to the fact that Setúbal possessed the most important fishing port in the country, which acted as a basis for a flourishing fish canning industry. This type of economic activity showed a remarkable capacity for attracting workforce especially from the South of Portugal. For this reason, at the beginning of the twentieth century, about 22% of Setúbal’s population was originally from outside the municipality.

In 1900, the same municipality stood out even more from all others in the kingdom when it started to be governed by Mariano de Carvalho, a well-known national figure, albeit with a declining political career. At the time, local power was normally in the hands of key local persons, and it was uncommon for the most important body of local government to be in the hands of former members of parliament or government, even in the most prominent urban centres in Portugal. Mariano de Carvalho had been a member of parliament, without interruption, since 1870, a former Minister of Treasury (in 1886-1889, and in 1891-1892), and was the leader of the “radical” ("liberal") wing of the monarchical regime – connected to the Reform (1870-1876) and Progressive parties (1876-1891). He considered Setúbal the ideal location to boost his public life. Having been pushed away from office on two occasions, following financial scandals

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2 The municipality of Setúbal had been part of the district of Lisbon since 1835. Its demographic and political importance was, nonetheless, recognised in 1926, when an autonomous district was created in Setúbal. This was the only administrative county of this kind established since the beginning of the Constitutional Monarchy in 1834 until the present. L.E. da Silveira, Território e Poder. Nas Origens do Estado Contemporâneo em Portugal (Cascais, 1997).
that tainted his credibility and political image (in 1889 and in 1892), Carvalho’s clashes with the leadership of his own party went back a long time. In 1890, upon his return from a successful journey around Mozambique in East Africa, he took up his seat in parliament as an independent.

At a time when the Portuguese political system was beginning to develop and consolidate itself, choosing to exercise power outside the main political circles, albeit at local level, represented a major risk, even for the most prominent and controversial political figures.

The present paper aims to examine Mariano de Carvalho’s leadership of Setúbal from 1900 until his death in 1905, and assess the governing of a small town in Portugal. This type of approach makes sense because Setúbal underwent a visible population growth and became a major economic centre at the beginning of the twentieth century. The objective is to record the development of key areas of municipal power activity and illustrate how the top local political hierarchy was liable to become the arena for conflict among the various political factions, including the Republicans, in the final years of the Monarchy in Portugal.

**Forms of local government at the start of the twentieth century**

The history of the Portuguese constitutional monarchy (1834-1910) was characterised by the reorganisation of the administrative landscape inherited from the Ancient Regime. This was done through several stages, oscillating between the imposition of a centralising focus and a more decentralised approach. The successive administrative reforms attempted in 1832, 1836, 1842, 1868, 1878, 1886, 1895, and 1900, some of which were either too ephemeral or unsuccessful, became the target for intense political dispute, which permeated and rallied the various national ideological and political movements.

In 1900, the kingdom was divided into 291 municipalities. In June of that year, the government of the Progressive Party attempted to impose, once more, its administrative programme and replace existing legislation, which had been passed five years earlier by the rival Regenerator Party and minister João Franco without the support of Parliament. As it happened, this legislation was passed just two days before the fall of the government, and was never implemented. Accordingly, until the establishment of the Republic in 1910, on a local level the country was ruled under the terms of the 1895 Law, which was updated in 1896.
This 1895/1896 Law differentiated municipalities according to two hierarchical levels, which was not a novelty, since the former body of laws (1886) had established it. The criteria for this division were of a political, administrative, demographic and economic nature. First category municipalities included all town councils that were heads of district (only 17 in the all country), as well as those deemed “important in terms of population and industrial or commercial growth”. Larger councils, like Setúbal, were ruled by nine councillors, whereas the smaller were governed by five. All councillors were elected every three years. The councils of Lisbon and Oporto were exception to this general rule and were governed, respectively, by fifteen and eleven councillors. In the capital, mandates lasted four years. The electoral law governing municipal elections was identical to the one involving the general elections of members of parliament. Councillors were responsible for electing, on a yearly basis, the president and vice-president of the municipality. Whenever the salary of presidents was paid out of the government budget, and exceeded a specific amount, they were appointed directly by the government among councillors in office. When this was the case, it was also the government’s responsibility to dismiss them.

In addition, the administrator of the municipality represented the executive and the civil governor at local level. He was an officer appointed by the government who could participate in meetings and debates. He communicated all deliberations made at these local power meetings to the civil governor. The ministerial tutelage was felt at other levels too. Certain matters, such as granting municipal loans, creating posts in the local administrative structure, budget allocation, extraordinary increase in direct taxes, and signing contracts for the supply of electricity, water and transportation required direct approval of the minister of the crown. Several other issues also required prior central approval in the case of first division municipalities, and authorisation of the District Committee for those in the second-class group\(^4\). In other words, most of the municipal activity depended on the government’s decision. Some matters, such as granting loans, creating posts and corresponding budget allocation, and increases in the

\(^4\) The District Committee was formed every three years according to a two-stage process. First, the municipalities in each district selected 2 or 3 delegates, depending on their category (first or second division), who were responsible for choosing the three members who would be part of the aforesaid District Committee. The Committee also included the civil governor, who acted as its president, and an administrative auditor. The latter had judicial duties of an administrative nature and was appointed by the Ministry of the Crown. These District Committees could be dissolved by governmental decree. They acted as advisory bodies to the civil governor and were also responsible for regulating the property of the various councils and to supervise and ensure that municipal decisions – local law – were the same in all councils belonging to the same district, and duly implemented.
percentages of direct and indirect taxes, could only be approved at a higher level if they were backed by a favourable view given by the 40 larger taxpayers - the economic elite of the municipality.

According to this model, the local political machine was dominated by the figure of the civil governor. This magistrate, appointed by the minister of the crown, had the power to intervene in “any matter of public interest”, including in issues outside the responsibility of the ministry in question, such as public education services and schools. The civil governor also watched over ecclesiastic authorities, was responsible for public hygiene and health, inspected health centres, hospitals, homes for the elderly and sanatoriums, and managed the civil police bodies. A large number of activities and public and private entities, including, for example, prisons, cultural associations, planning municipal roads, tax collection, or management of cemeteries, depended on the actions and information transmitted by the civil governor. The municipal administrators assisted civil governors in each municipality, and carried out police and inspection activities that were the responsibility of the administrative magistrates. Municipal administrators were equally responsible for allocating several types of licenses, including, for instance, putting up an entertainment show, opening a factory or issuing firearm permits. This resulted in a strongly centralised regime, which conferred magistrates a decisive clout in local life, and subjected elected municipal bodies to tight supervision. In this architecture of power to be elected to the post of town councilor or mayor had a more honorary and symbolic value than political validity.

A way of getting closer to local power in Portugal

It was in this context that Mariano de Carvalho carried out his duties as the leader of the Setúbal Town Council from 1900 onwards. He was not a mayor like the others. Besides being an eminent scholar, he was extremely well-known in the media and national politics circles. In professional terms, he had enjoyed a long career as a teacher of mathematics and astronomy at the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, which was one of the country’s most prestigious higher education institutions (1863-1897). As a journalist, he was a prominent figure, to the extent that his contemporaries considered

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him one of the best writers in nineteenth century Portugal. He was associated with the founding of several newspapers, of which *Diário Popular* (1866), which he directed since day one until his death, was the most important.

His life had a further public side that conferred him a lot of visibility. Having decided to enter politics, he ran for parliament for the first time in 1869. His defeat at the Ribatejo constituency\(^7\) did not hamper his determination. In the following elections in 1870, he ran again for the same constituency and, this time, won the seat thanks to a network of personal support he managed to attract in the meantime. His career in parliament was one of most noteworthy of the entire Constitutional Monarchy. It must be stressed that Mariano de Carvalho was not a member of parliament like all others, given that he was elected to parliament twenty times consecutively. Between March 1870 and February 1905, he never lost an election. Out of over two thousand members of parliament in office between 1834 and 1910, just two were elected more times than him. He earned the nickname “the Hidden Power” thanks to his political ability and manoeuvring capacity in the halls of power.

In ideological terms, he started his career on the extreme-left of the monarchy, becoming one of the voices with high authority in the emerging Reform Party (1870-1876). He fought for administrative decentralisation, for upholding moral values in public life and constitutional reform to make it democratic, for reducing king’s powers, and for tighter state control of public finance. He felt some sympathy towards republican ideas and developed the art of rhetoric, which turned his voice and debating ability into weapons feared both by opponents and fellow-thinkers. In 1876, he was involved in the founding of the Progressive Party, created as the alternative to the Regenerator Party, but continued to defend the same political agenda\(^8\). In 1886 and in 1891, he was appointed Minister of the Treasury, but on both occasions the head of government dismissed him for his involvement in successive fuzzy financial scandals, which weakened his position. At the beginning of the 1890s, he left the Progressive Party, of which he had, unsuccessfully, attempted to become the leader in 1885, and

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\(^7\) A region located in the centre of Portugal and which was formally recognised in the 1936 administrative reform. Before that, its territory was part of the province of Estremadura (created for administrative purposes in 1832), whose capital was Lisbon.

\(^8\) The Progressive Party, founded in 1876, was the main monarchical party of the centre-left, and fought for power against the Regenerator Party, which was founded in 1856 and was the Portuguese centre-right monarchical party.
pursued his career in parliament as an independent. Around 1900 he got close to the rival Regenerator Party, although he never became a member\(^9\).

In 1899, Mariano de Carvalho demonstrated yet another side of his long political life by inverting the geographic areas of his political influence. He left Ribatejo, which had been his favourite electoral constituency since he entered politics, for Setúbal. The change was due to the fact he had recently bought property near Azeitão, a small village in the neighborhood. He began to travel quite often to the proximity of the Arrábida Mountain, a fact that earned him the alliance of the main local political figures. His prestige in the region was extremely high and the local leaders, who decided the fate of election results, rapidly adopted him\(^{10}\).

Used as he was to playing a leading role in politics, Mariano de Carvalho wanted to have a 'word of say' on local political matters. On 4 November 1899, about 3 weeks before the election for members of parliament, there was an important political meeting at the D. Amélia Theatre in Setúbal, called for and led by José de Groot Pombo\(^11\), one of the local key figures\(^12\). The purpose of the meeting was to choose the local candidate to the forthcoming elections. After explaining the key aspects of the electoral policy carried out in previous elections, José Pombo confirmed he had been invited by Mariano de Carvalho to support the candidacy of Henry Burnay\(^13\), the Count of Burnay, who ran against the governmental candidacy of Carlos Ferreira\(^14\).

The name of the financier was unanimously accepted. This fuelled rumours associating this list with the Regenerator Party, a connection that some local press rejected, given that, in Setúbal, “currently, there is no group with a marked political stance”\(^15\). In effect, Setúbal was also the stage of the “rotating parties” struggle for electoral majority. On the one side stood the supporters of the Progressive Party, who, alongside local figures such as António José Baptista, Henrique Augusto de Carvalho Paiva and António José Fernandes backed the aforementioned Carlos Ferreira. On the

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\(^9\) P.J. Fernandes, Mariano Cirilo de Carvalho, o «Poder Oculto» do liberalismo progressista (1876-1892), (Lisbon, 2010).

\(^{10}\) Azeitão is a region near Setúbal and head of one municipality up to 1855. It had several wine producing estates. Arrábida is a mountain located on the left bank of the estuary of the Sado River, which flows into Setúbal.

\(^{11}\) A councillor of the Setúbal Town Council connected to the Regenerator Party.

\(^{12}\) F. Paxeco, Setúbal e as suas celebridades, (Lisbon, 1930).

\(^{13}\) Henry Burnay (1838-1909), was a financier of Belgian origin born in Oporto. He was one of the wealthiest men in Portugal. He had interests in almost all economic sectors, including banking, the press, the tobacco industry, and railways. He was awarded the title of 1st Count of Burnay in 1886.

\(^{14}\) At the time the Progress Party was in office.

\(^{15}\) Revista de Setúbal, 9 November 1899, 2.
other, were the regenerators trying to launch the candidacy of Henry Burnay, with the assistance of Groot Pombo and Mariano de Carvalho, who already had some clout in local politics. Despite the political support guaranteed by the Regenerator Party, Henry Burnay was running as an independent. The close relationship between the capitalist Burnay and the “Hidden Power” was not recent or merely due to common electoral interests. They had strongly opposed each other personally and politically during the 1870s, but from 1892 onwards the former enemies had become closer again.

Thus, Henry Burnay carried out his electoral campaign in the constituency of Setúbal. Two days after, there was another meeting to support his candidacy at Azeitão Theatre-Club, which was attended by several of the most important local farmers and businessmen. Subsequently, he visited several charity organisations in Setúbal, where he made “important donations”, although there were also some demonstrations against him, to the extent that, in some places, he was received to the yelling of “abaixo o boné”. As expected, when the election finally took place, the result was quite tight, with Henry Burnay winning over Carlos Ferreira by 1,064/879 votes. Thus, the voting in Azeitão became vital to validate this result. This means that without Mariano de Carvalho’s support, the outcome could have been quite different.

In the following elections in November 1900, it was Mariano de Carvalho’s turn to run for the Setúbal uninominal constituency. Besides being a public figure in the region, the announcement stirred up some excitement, as a confrontation with an important republican candidate, João Chagas, was expected. Local authorities expressed their preference for Mariano de Carvalho, due to the “exceptional skills of the illustrious candidate, and also because the electoral triumph of such an important public figure would be very advantageous and valuable for the town and municipality of Setúbal”. In addition to his personal merits, “one must also take into consideration the political situation of counsellor Mariano de Carvalho, who has close links to the noble

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17 Revista de Setúbal, 23 November 1899, 1-2. *Translator’s note*: “abaixo o boné” literally means “down with the beret”. The word “boné” is phonetically close to “Burnay”. This play on words was used to express opposition to the count of Burnay.
18 O Commercio de Setúbal, 2, 5, 9, and 30 November 1899, 1 and A Folha de Setúbal, 3 December 1899, 1.
19 João Chagas (1863-1925), was a well-known journalist, writer, literary critic, politician, and diplomat. He joined the Republican Party in 1890, and, in 1891, participated in the first failed attempt to establish the Republic in Portugal. He was sent to exile to Angola and succeeded to run away to Brazil, where he continued to fight for the republican cause. In 1910, he was appointed ambassador in Paris. In 1911, he was appointed Prime-Minister, a post he held for just two months.
and illustrious leader of the Regenerator Party, and hence our leader – counsellor Hintze Ribeiro”\textsuperscript{20}. It was an arranged marriage\textsuperscript{21}. Setúbal elites welcomed Mariano de Carvalho in the hope of gaining public visibility at the centres of political decisions, whereas the candidate benefited from the support of local notables to guarantee the continuity, without major upheavals, of his parliamentary career as an independent, albeit close to the regenerators.

The electoral struggle in this constituency reflected the weight of the name of Mariano de Carvalho. João Chagas still succeeded to organise some political gatherings and electoral meetings to promote his candidacy, and could count on the support of several top members of the Republican Party, like Brito Camacho\textsuperscript{22}, who went to Setúbal exclusively for that purpose.

However, Mariano de Carvalho had a different strategy. He chose to address the voters directly and send them a letter where he wrote “as a result of my decision to run for parliament in the Setúbal constituency, where I own real estate, I beg from Your Excellency to grant me your assistance through your vote and influence. In order to request either, I do not need to resort to verbal attacks or insults against my opponents. Suffice to inform Your Excellency that throughout my long political career, I have always pursued the principles of freedom and order, without which modern societies cannot exist. Due to the interests that tie me to this municipality, the friends I have here, and my personal knowledge of its main necessities, I am also in a position to affirm to Your Excellency that I shall dedicate my attention, to the best of my ability, to its material and moral improvements, which it deserves so much, and of which it has been so very much deprived in the last years. In the hope of counting on the support of Your Excellency, I thank you in anticipation and with high esteem”\textsuperscript{23}.

\textsuperscript{20} Ernesto Hintze Ribeiro (1849-1907) was one of the most remarkable Portuguese politicians of the Constitutional Monarchy. He was a Member of Parliament (1878-1886), Peer of the Realm (1886-1907), Crown’s General Attorney (1891), Minister of Public Works (1881, 1881-1883), of Treasury (1883-1886), of Foreign Affairs (1881, 1890, 1893-1895), and of the Crown (1900-1903, 1903-1904, and 1906). He was the last major leader of the Regenerator Party (1900-1907), and Prime-Minister on four occasions (1893-1897, 1900-1903, 1903-1904, and 1906).

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Revista de Setúbal}, 22 November 1900, 1.

\textsuperscript{22} Brito Camacho (1862-1934) was a military doctor, writer, publisher, and a politician. A prominent figure of the Republican Party, he was elected Member of Parliament during the Constitutional Monarchy, and argued in favour of the fall of the regime in parliament. He was Minister of Development (1910-1911) and High-Commissioner of the Republic in Mozambique (1921-1923). He founded and was the leader of the Unionist Party, one of the most important of the First Republic. In addition, he was a highly regarded journalist, and founded and directed the newspaper \textit{A Lucta}.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{O Elmano}, 17 November 1900, 1.
As a result of bad weather conditions and on his doctor’s advice, Mariano de Carvalho stayed in Lisbon and did not do any more campaigning in Setúbal. The wide range of candidacies led most of the friends of António José Baptista, the mayor at the time, to announce they would vote for Mariano de Carvalho. As the next table indicates, the triumph of the “Hidden Power”, with 78.7% of the votes, against the 19% obtained by João Chagas, was quite significant. Everything happened quietly. Republicans had to wait some time to be able to demonstrate their political clout in the region²⁴.

### Voting in Constituency no. 92 (Setúbal), on 26 November 1900.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assemblies</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Mariano de Carvalho</th>
<th>João Chagas</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>São Julião</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anunciada</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Sebastião</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azeitão</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmela</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,917</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,509</strong></td>
<td><strong>365</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Meanwhile, Mariano de Carvalho’s political career was further boosted before the end of 1900, when the Setúbal town council was dissolved by a decree issued on 22 December, as a result of an investigation on its management up to 5 February 1900. The findings pointed to “several irregularities in its bookkeeping and accounts, as well as use of municipal revenue not in accordance with the respective governmental authorisations”.

In accordance with the law, new municipal elections were called. Meanwhile, a provisional administrative committee carried out the management of the municipality until new councillors were elected. Mariano de Carvalho was chosen as president of this committee, although, in practice, it was run by the vice-president Venâncio Olímpio Ferreira Torres, since Mariano de Carvalho continued to live in Lisbon and was not always able to attend deliberative meetings.

Whenever the president went to Setúbal, he was often offered accommodation by one of the local dignitaries, who always expressed utmost satisfaction to have him as a guest. On some occasions, the representatives of region’s entire press – *O Distrito, O Elmano, A Revista de Setúbal* and *Comércio de Setúbal* – were invited to a Sunday lunch, which provided an opportunity to discuss topics of public interest and promote the name of Mariano de Carvalho as an agent of local power.

²⁴ A. Afonso, *Setúbal – Roteiros Republicanos* (Lisbon, 2010).
Despite having no previous experience in municipal politics, the Member of Parliament soon became familiar with the main problems affecting the municipality. The most serious was lack of public safety. There was insufficient policing, lighting was poor, and thieves posed serious difficulties on a daily basis. In addition, road access was deficient, particularly in the roads connecting Setúbal to Azeitão and Palmela, another small village in the neighborhood, which were in extremely bad condition.

Mariano de Carvalho’s arrival in Setúbal also had consequences at a family level. His son-in-law, Claro da Rica, an engineer born in the region, soon became involved in local businesses. Even before the elections for the town council, he presented the municipal administrative committee a project for building of a sewage system worth 200 contos (200,000$000) that local press classified as impracticable.\footnote{When the project was discussed, Mariano de Carvalho was not present due to the bad weather conditions which ruined the roads to Setúbal. \textit{Revista de Setúbal}, 25 January 1901, 1.}

When the elections took place on 2 January 1901, Mariano de Carvalho was elected with 1,805 votes and no opposition.

The group of new councillors took office on 25 February, and Mariano de Carvalho occupied the most prominent place. The first meeting took place the following day, and, after the 1900 financial statements were approved, the new mayor presented the budget for the current year. He then proposed the reorganisation of the external inspection sector, eliminated an amount allocated to the building of a new road, and appointed a councillors’ committee to assess ways of improving Praça do Quebedo, Avenida Luísa Todi, Passeio do Lago, and the swimming beach, showing he was already familiar with the local agenda.\footnote{\textit{Revista de Setúbal}, 28 February 1901, 2.}

Despite all his commitment, Mariano de Carvalho was not able to attend all the council’s meetings, which were held on Wednesdays after lunch. It was more usual to find him at the extraordinary sessions on Saturdays. The council rapidly got used to having an absentee president, as it dealt with a variety of issues, including appointing a municipal doctor, ordering the printing of the Local Body of Laws (\textit{Código de Posturas})\footnote{The municipal \textit{Code of Posturas} was the most important body of laws for local implementation.}, approving the framework of municipal inspection, which was open to tender, granting building permits to individuals, or warning debtors by placing edicts in newspapers requesting them to pay up their debts within 60 days.\footnote{\textit{Revista de Setúbal}, 15 March 1901, 2.}
As expected, Mariano de Carvalho’s presence in Setúbal was secondary, as long as he could ensure some local visibility at the central government. The press was constantly protesting about the poor conditions of the roads between Setúbal, Palmela, and Azeitão, pressing their Mayor and, concurrently, the Member of Parliament of their constituency to pressure the authorities in Lisbon to improve the municipal road system.29

Besides those already mentioned, the priorities of the council’s administration were: repair of pavements in Palmela; in Azeitão, removal of the abattoir, repair the butcher’s building, and preparation of a storage facility for materials belonging to the municipality; in Aldeia de Irmãos, it was repairing the well. Mariano de Carvalho also expressed an interest in the town’s water supply, suggesting a payment of $050 réis per cubic metre to the Water Company for the water supply service, and the transfer of the Bonfim public laundry area somewhere else. He also approved a budget of 50 contos (50.000$000) for a series of improvements in Palmela and Azeitão, and asked for a loan of 11 contos (11.000$000) to pay debts incurred by former councils. The new court was also inaugurated under his management and in his presence on 28 July 1901. So, this is how the council of small town was run in Portugal at the end of the monarchy.

He was re-elected as Member of Parliament for the plurinominal constituency of Setúbal (no. 17) in October 1901, this time unopposed. Unsurprisingly, on 3 November 1901 he was elected for a second mandate at the town council, obtaining 2.178 votes, more than in the previous year. His continuation in office was expected “as the current council has incontestably earned the right to public recognition for the good services provided to the municipality”30.

Despite being quite ill, Mariano de Carvalho started to go to Setúbal quite often to chair council meetings. He was seen in the region more than in Parliament. In the beginning of February 1901, a major local improvement project was announced. This was a contract for the lighting of the city, which the mayor was personally committed to. The project proposed to end, once and for all, the archaic oil lanterns and expand the number of gas lamps from 300 to 600. In addition, the council only paid 9$000 with each new lamp, whereas in the past it spent 13$5000. The price of gas supplied to individuals also went down from $070 réis per cubic metre to $060 réis. The contract’s

29 Revista de Setúbal, 22 March 1901, 1.
30 Revista de Setúbal, 7 November 1901, 2.
project was approved at a council meeting chaired by Mariano de Carvalho on 19 May 1902. Accordingly, material improvements also reached Setúbal thanks to its mayor.

Meanwhile, the first signs of discontent regarding the leader of the council started to be felt. When Councillor Henrique Pereira suggested an increase from $023 to $030 réis per kilo in the tax on beef, Mariano de Carvalho supported an increase, but just up to $025 réis per kilo. When the issue of replacing Vice-president Venâncio Torres came up, the “Hidden Power” suggested that a councillors’ committee persuaded Torres to work with the council again. Henrique Pereira opposed this proposal, stating he did not think this type of influence was the most appropriate.

By this point, Mariano de Carvalho was completely familiar with Setúbal’s situation. He was responsible for the areas covering the road system, education, and library. Accordingly, of his own initiative, he added years 4 and 5 to the schooling years taught at the Secondary Municipal School, which had its name changed to Setúbal National Lyceum. On 26 April 1903, he was part of the entourage that accompanied the Minister of Public Works, Count of Paço Vieira, on a public visit to Setúbal. When they arrived, Mariano de Carvalho was cheered as mayor as a sign of popularity. The minister’s visit had been his initiative, and his son, Carlos Mariano de Carvalho, and his son-in-law Claro da Rica, also joined the group.

The main event took place at the D. Amélia theatre in Setúbal, where a large number of representatives of the municipal councils in the area came to listen to the guests. Mariano de Carvalho presided over the table, thanked dignitaries for their presence, and explained that the purpose of the visit was to foster the development of the Sado region. Completely familiar with the subject, he gave a brief overview of the situation in the city of Setúbal, which lacked everything. The idea supported by those present was to build a railway line over the Sado valley up to Sines, passing through Alcácer and Grândola, a project that had Mariano de Carvalho’s full commitment. On behalf of the Setúbal council, he offered 40 contos (40.000$000) to the project, and donated the public lands where the railway line would be built. He went further to propose the appointment of a propaganda committee to promote the work, which was

31 Revista de Setúbal, 22 May 1902, 2.
32 Alfredo Pinto de Villas-Boas, 1st Count of Paço Vieira (1860-1926), was an outstanding magistrate and a politician close to the Regenerator Party. He was a Member of Parliament (1890-1910) and became Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies (1904). He was also Civil Governor of the District of Ponta Delgada, in the Azores (1896-1897) and Minister of Public Works (1903-1904).
33 Revista de Setúbal, 30 April 1903, 1.
34 Sines, Alcácer and Grândola are smalls towns further South of Setúbal.
accepted. José Dias Ferreira, the members of parliament and mayors of the region in question were appointed to this committee. The minister granted his support to the idea, announcing he would rapidly request the preparation of studies to implement it.\(^{35}\)

However, as time went by, Mariano de Carvalho started to be seen less frequently in the city, which did not go unnoticed and started to draw criticism. António José Baptista, one of the largest local landowners and himself a former mayor, announced publicly his intention to get the post back. He stated that his candidacy to the municipal elections of 1904 aimed to combat the neglect which, in his view, the city had been subject to. Despite being physically weakened, Mariano de Carvalho did not underestimate his opponent. His political friends managed to reach an agreement with the supporters of António Baptista to present a joint list to the elections. A gentlemen’s committee signed the agreement in Lisbon on 2 November 1904, in the presence of Civil Governor D. João de Alarcão. The team of councillors chosen as a result of this arrangement was to be led by Mariano de Carvalho, with José Joaquim Fragoso as Vice-President, as he was a man with authority, and Venâncio Torres had already left.

This time the forthcoming municipal elections were expected to be quite competitive, with an opposing list organised by the Nationalist Party entering the fight.\(^{36}\) It must be mentioned that Mariano de Carvalho was re-elected as Member of Parliament for Setúbal at the general parliamentary elections in June 1904, with the monarchic list winning over the republican counterpart by a large margin. At the local elections, Mariano de Carvalho obtained 1,051 out of a total of 1,564 lists submitted, but António José Baptista, with 1,093 votes, and João José Salgado Júnior, with 1,053 votes, ended up ahead of him. Nonetheless, the agreement established previously was maintained, and the “Hidden Power” was kept as mayor. The list headed by Henrique Augusto Pereira, who had been excluded from the group of friends of Mariano de Carvalho, obtained a mere 498 votes.

By then, the health problems afflicting the politician became more intense, preventing him from attending the swearing-in ceremony. His colleagues, aware of his physical condition, released him from some functions, and left him to manage just the

\(^{35}\) José Dias Ferreira (1837-1909) was a lawyer, politician and jurist. He served as a Minister of Treasury (1868, 1870 and 1892) and as Prime Minister of Portugal (1892-1893) and was the country’s most influential civil law scholar during the late 19th century. Diário de Notícias, 27 April 1903, 2.

\(^{36}\) The Nationalist party was founded in 1903 following dissidence at the Regenerator Party. It had a predominantly catholic orientation, and did not enjoy much political representativity. It disappeared with the advent of the Republic in 1910. Revista de Setúbal, 3 November 1904, 1 and A.C. da Silva, O Partido Nacionalista no contexto do Nacionalismo Católico (1901-1910), (Lisbon, 1996).
section dealing with transport. His dyspnoea attacks became more frequent, and the effects of arteriosclerosis more visible. He started to live on caffeine and his coughing attacks were constant, the result of a lifetime of smoking. 

He was still able to find the strength to run for yet another mandate at parliament for the Setúbal constituency in the February 1905 general elections, with the monarchical list triumphing again over the republican one by a large number of votes. This was the last election in which Mariano de Carvalho participated. In July 1905, he still managed to become involved in question of finding a solution for the sewage problem in Setúbal, but by now his strength was definitely leaving him. He died at home in Estoril, in the outskirts of Lisbon, in October.

Conclusion

When Mariano de Carvalho fell into disgrace the last time he held a post in government, he was accused of being a “dishonest financier” who threw the country to a "swamp". At the end of the nineteenth century, in Portugal, “Mariano” was the nickname given to someone considered to be a “fraud” and a “crook”. This was the final, and quite unfair, image by which Mariano de Carvalho was remembered.Rejected by almost everyone, he did not renounce the limelight, albeit without the respect he had in the past. His subsequent career, which took him closer to the Regenerator Party, demonstrated how an independent could survive within national politics, but it also showed that freedom from party politics did no convey much political importance to whoever decided to follow that path. In other words, and paradoxically, his distancing from the progressive circle was perceived as an early proof of the dissolution of the monarchical party system. However, the mild visibility of Mariano de Carvalho’s career between 1892 and 1905 was a sign of the maturing and structuring that same party system had attained in the final years of the monarchy. Although political parties showed, from that moment on, a propensity for fragmentation, in truth no one could really exist outside their patronage.

Becoming a landowner in the region of Setúbal opened the way to his admission to municipal political life. At the end of the nineteenth century, in Portugal, local elites

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37 M.C. de Carvalho, Memórias de Mariano de Carvalho contadas por sua filha (Lisbon, 1946), 56.
38 E. Fernandes, Memórias do «Esculápio» (Lisbon, 1940), 101-102.
39 B. Machado, Conferências Políticas (Coimbra, 1904), 11.
40 A. Gallis, A burla do constitucionalismo. Autópsia à Política Portuguesa no Actual Momento Político. A pantomina, os pantomineiros e as pantominices do nosso mundo político (Lisbon, 1905).
were normally formed by people, who were not too keen to accept individuals who had gained national prominence. The latter also chose to attain status in other institutions of power, such as ministries, parliament or the press. A previous career in public administration was not included in the *cursus honorum* of those who held strong political aspirations. Only a mere 5.5% of members of parliament elected between 1878 and 1910 had been mayors. In Portugal, there was a clear dissociation between political careers made in the “periphery” (mayors, municipal councillors, civil governors) and in the “centre” (members of parliament or ministries). From this perspective, Mariano de Carvalho’s career towards the end of his life was an exception.

The governing agenda was not too different from those found in other parts of the country. Issues concerning public safety, basic sanitation (water distribution and sewage systems), and material improvements (electrification, public works, and roads) were as important in Setúbal as in other villages and towns in the country. His arrival to Setúbal had a double purpose: it served as a means to re-launch his decade-long public career, and to bring him closer to the political party he had fought passionately since 1869. From the municipality’s viewpoint, to be governed by a national figure could increase the public visibility of a town that was affirming itself in demographic and economic terms, even if that leader was often absent.

The physical disappearance of Mariano de Carvalho had decisive consequences in terms of political government of Setubal, ending his death to serve the purposes of the Republican Party locally. In the 1906 elections the Republican Party managed to elect two members of parliament in Setúbal and in April 1909, the city will stage the Congress of the Republican Party where the revolutionary way in order to seize power was approved. In this Setubal meeting was also elected the new directory of the Republican Party that will prepare the October Revolution for the following year, where John Chagas, one of the political opponents of Mariano de Carvalho at the end of this life, was present. In the elections that take place in August 1910, the republicans could finally elect three of four deputies to represent the circle of Setúbal in parliament. If by this time the figure of Mariano de Carvalho had served in part as a brake on the republicanism victory in Setubal, his death, in some way, even indirectly paved the way for the city political conquest by democratic forces. After 1910, Setúbal became one of the biggest bastions of the Republicans at national scale.