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The Municipalist Manifesto

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This text brings together several lines of discussion that emerged in the workshops and working spaces of the first Meeting for Municipalism, Self-Government and Counterpower, held in Málaga from 1-3 July over 200 participants from 30 cities in the Spanish State and other countries such as Italy, England, Austria and Germany. It aims to serve less as a summary of everything said than as points shared by the majority, with view to thinking further together about the building of the municipalist movement.

The municipalist movement and the question of organization

1. The municipalist movement claims its autonomy vis-à-vis any party or centralized instance, its method of democratic construction and its roots in the cities and localities in which the municipalist initiatives have grown.

2. Nevertheless, the election lists and municipalist movements are set to forge a politics of diverse alliances capable of accompanying and pushing the central conflicts that cross the municipal scale: opposition to the law of budgetary stability – the *Ley Montoro* –, the housing emergency, municipal debt and the processes of

remunicipalization of public/common services such as water or the creation of new municipal services such as power grid operators.

3. A desirable horizon could consist in connecting a network of lists and movements. With view to building this federated network we recommend supporting the maintenance of autonomous and the creation of new communication media that are capable of accompanying these processes, setting the public agenda and elaborating discourses oriented towards the generation of a new social common sense.

4. Municipalism also means imagining strategies for providing resources for promoting a new ecosystem of movements and institutional experiments – a new institutionality – from the institutions, preserving, in turn, the autonomous agenda of the respective movements.

Social spaces and centers of citizen management

5. One of the challenges of municipalism lies in gaining social and institutional recognition of the existence and autonomy of the social spaces and centers of citizen management that put the right to the city and democratic participation into effect.

6. From this explicit recognition comes the necessity that the municipalities provide public resources and infrastructures for common use in accordance with a social agenda that either already occupies and manages spaces, or which actively demands the transfer of rights of use of others: new regulations, assignments of rights of use, etc.

7. Spaces of encounter between comrades active on the institutional front and in the movements that manage social spaces

should also be generated. The objective is to elaborate a municipalist discourse capable of extending its legitimacy and locating the conflict at the heart of the right to the city.

Social unionism and social rights

8. The dismantling of the welfare State makes social self-organization more and more indispensible with respect to implementing social rights. This is basically what we call social unionism. Facing a horizon of precarization and growing informality, places of work lose centrality as spaces of conflict, and therefore we must imagine new forms of struggle capable of producing rights. It is time to collectively discuss what new forms of union we need.

9. The municipalist movement should be a privileged place for supporting, giving energy to and accompanying initiatives such as the PAH [Platform for People Affected by Mortgages], Yo Sí Sanidad Universal [Action group for universal healthcare], autonomous eateries, etc, where self-organization is generated from the politicization of collective problems and the creation of structures of mutual help.

10. The neighborhood can be a privileged place for coordinating experiences at the territorial scale, but also for expanding the scale and capacity of the municipalist network. We propose to experiment with forms of social unionism that combine various aspects that are currently separated: living and health, questions of labor or food. We also want to generate shared structures of common communication and of defense.

Work, cooperativism and remunicipalization

11. Maintaining the quality and universality of public services is essential in the battle against neoliberalism and in adequately redefining the public; this is a terrain that allows for experiments of democraticization, self-management or co-management. This is why we insist that the municipal movement find common paths for recovering/creating new public services and for opening processes of conflict capable of activating and supporting the mobilization of city-dwellers.

12. To this end, it makes sense to fuse forces and socialize information generated in different municipalities, where many successful examples of remunicipalizaiton and of the creation of new services are to be found. This includes other tools such as social clauses or legal loopholes that allow for the improvement of the quality of outsourced or subcontracted work, as well as for experiences of transfers of rights of use to labor cooperatives and new models of co-management that we are capable of inventing.

13. We are calling to think about possibilities for coordinated disobedience between different municipalities against the laws restricting economic capacity, laws of indebtedness or of contracting these local governments, the first hurdle to recovering public/common services.

14. It is necessary to launch lines of action that allow the cooperative fabric to be strengthened in the medium and long run, using the public institutions as privileged partners. The institutions should also support initiatives that are creating cooperatives in trendsetting sectors with the greatest need for investment. This support will be given in respect of the autonomy of the cooperative movement.

The Europe of rebel cities

15. In Italy and other countries, initiatives inspired by the municipalist impulse generated in the Spanish State have come into being. Municipalism and the federation of cities at the European scale must be a privileged space for the construction of a Europe against austerity, but also against racisms and fascisms in full swing in different countries of the continent, such as is evidenced with the human tragedy of the refugees.

16. The municipal governments "of change" have been the first to raise their voices against the intolerable treatment of migrant and refugee persons and the growing inequality in the EU. But such protest needs to be translated into processes and challenges that are substantive rather than merely rhetorical. In the perspective of this meeting, this is the challenge for a network of political, fiscal and economic counterpowers of rebel cities and towns. A counterpower that will not understand itself only as a counterpart or counterweight to "true" power, but rather as a new power that transforms power, a constituent power.

17. This counterpower is one of the available paths to unblock the social and political struggles in the European South and to make these forceful with respect to the dynamic of the EU. The municipalist idea is one of the most notable missing chapters in the European drama, stalled by the dialectic between the nation-States and the EU institutions (Eurogroup, Commission, European Council). A network of rebel cities could materially make another Europe, while combating and destroying the Europe of austerity, financial authoritarianism, xenophobia and the opportunity for fascism and war.

Until the next meeting, planned in Iruñea–Pamplona in November/December. We will meet again to continue working! Municipalists of the world, unite!

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