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For the autonomy of the municipality

José Xena

21 January 1937

Much has been written about the municipalities as representative bodies of the population in any given territory. Today, when a social transformation is taking place in the shadow of war on the Iberian soil, the subject has gained in significance and must be given due attention.

From the days of July [1936] to the present, the workers' organisations have shaped the formidable resistance to the fascist attack. Special circumstances, difficult to foresee, have resulted in these forces collaborating with others of a purely political character, whose history recalls for the revolutionary proletariat times of repression and the quashing of rights gained over many years of struggle.

Up to now the defence cadres of each organisation, along with a good part of the general population, have fought together against the forces of national and international fascism. This unity has given rise to a spirit of collaboration in the administrative and governmental bodies. There, the proletarian organisations represent the interests of working people exploited by the bourgeoisie, mon-

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itored by the state, and brutalised by religion. The political parties meanwhile represent both a fraction of the capitalist class and that section of popular opinion that the parties consider to be politically immature, incapable of organising society without the guidance of themselves and state legislators.

Collaboration in the municipality, between representatives of such different organisations and tendencies, is causing a good deal of unease in the towns, and for the moment there is no solution in sight.

Today, just as yesterday, the town is the site of fundamentally opposed interests. The collective interest, tending towards the social, is contrary to the maintenance of private and individual interests and vice-versa. While a large section of the population attempts to solve the problems posed by the war and the economic transformation through libertarian federalist principles, other retrograde elements want to preserve the old forms of private property and make every effort to reconstruct the state that guarantees their power.

In this period of revolutionary and anti-fascist struggle, the representative institutions bear the imprint of the minorities that compose them. Thus, in some areas, the popular transformations take place without significant resistance, in others this resistance hinders their realisation, and in some places the municipality is governed by the same corrupt officials as before, albeit with a new political denomination.

The field is not well defined. On the one hand the parties pay lip service to a social transformation corresponding to the desire for freedom of the proletariat, on the other they defend the property of the rich and the petite-bourgeoisie.

The two positions are incompatible. In defending their revolutionary interests, the workers must necessarily clash with the conservatism of the political parties and the Marxists.

The municipality is where these antagonisms are playing out with greatest intensity. For our part we will not cease to demand

clarity with regard to the ends pursued by each of the minorities that compose the anti-fascist movement. If they are a friend to the social transformation that enables the workers to free themselves from the yoke of exploitation and from the despotism of the state, they cannot prevent the workers from socialising the wealth of society and administering it for themselves, using the liquid reserves of the old possessing classes for their own self-defence.

Nor can it be accepted that the political parties manoeuvre to economically strangle those municipalities that are not constituted according to their own precepts.

Anarchists will always rise with maximum energy to defend municipal autonomy and the right of the organised workers to socialise their society.