AFTER REBELLION: THE SERENE CITY
Joanna Pope on Francesca Bria

Our era is the one where competition was finally forgotten, Morozov reminds us. This itself is something we tend to forget, living "serenely", as people like to say, in our world now, embedded as it is in a logic whose scaling-up was once unthinkable. Indeed, it is perhaps important to also remember, if not commemorate, the actors and structures that made this expansion of a complexity-ready mode of being possible.

For this, you could do worse than to return to speeches by Francesca Bria. Those of us with school-age children are intimately familiar with Bria-as-hero, the "When I want to grow up I want to be Francesca" Bria, Bria as seen speaking passionately to crowds in Barcelona, the New Serenity's revolutionary heart, in the pages of colouring books. And for good reason.

So many of us have adapted to city life now, its stable rhythms: Three days a week green/commons work, one day a week city hall, and whatever you want in between. But without Bria, we wouldn't have had the city as we know it. And without the city, there would have been no revolution (and, quite possibly, no Stafford Beer Society).

So, as a reminder, we include Bria's opening address at the 2038 New Serenity Allied City Summit, also as Decode, here in full:

"I want to begin with a reflection on what we have achieved. When the old system collapsed, we worked hard to build a new one in the ruins, showing that when cities take radical action in times of crisis, they win power. As we take our next steps as a global alliance of progressive, green, digital and democratic cities, we look to these victories as a source of hope, strength and knowledge.

Let us start from the beginning. The 2020s began with a string of public health disasters and climate emergencies, the latter heavily impacting digital infrastructure, large-scale, centralized data centers in particular. These disasters were exacerbated by incredible data mismanagement by incumbent platforms. Thanks to an historic collaboration between rebel cities and citizens, these collapsing companies were banned from Europe. Suddenly, we faced an unprecedented opportunity for Decode technology: A chance to radically decentralize digital infrastructure, to enable citizens to control their data, and to allow applications based on free software and interoperable protocols to flourish. And we seized it. Today, value and wealth are no longer concentrated in the hands of Facebook, Google and Amazon. Instead, we are building a global data commons.

Timing was equally crucial when it came to making the Decode vision of a new monetary system a reality. Who can forget the chaos unleashed when the Euro crashed during the crisis? I firmly believe we would still be living this chaos today without the swift action by our network of allied cities that brought the e-Euro to life, and with it, a decentralized public money system that preserved the privacy of the people.

Unlike past exploitative forms of digital money like Facebook's Libra that essentially functioned as surveillance systems, the e-Euro not only restored the digital sovereignty of cities and

their citizens. It also fostered the development of a range of alternative currencies and complementary solidarity-based economies, supporting communities as they experimented with new and old forms of commoning, mutual aid, community energy, public health, open source software and hardware, material design, education, agroecology and ecosystem restoration.

From Barcelona to Amsterdam, New York, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires and all over India and China, radical cities have proven themselves to be vibrant laboratories for such experiments. The very same bottom-up decision making processes that helped dismantle extractive platforms have transformed into a resilient hybrid system of online and offline democracy, allowing people to draft legislation themselves and participate in policy making, and in turn, allowing cities to work with the collective intelligence of their citizens. These participatory models that began in city halls have spread and connected across regions and continents. We are currently witnessing the rise of an incredible global democratic movement, backed by the momentum of our cities.

If we have learned anything from our victories, it is that we must maintain this momentum. Though we are much more resilient today, we are not immune to crises. There will be more anthropogenic disasters, there will be more economic shocks, and there will be more conflict. As we confront these, we must not retreat, but keep moving forward, keep experimenting, sharing knowledge and extending solidarity to the cities and citizens in our alliance, and to the many more who will join it.

This week, we will debate our next steps towards a common constitution for this movement, forming what I hope will be the basis of a global green digital deal. We are at the beginning of a journey towards a new social contract for a new digital life, for a society based on social and ecological justice, and for economic equity and economic democracy."

This year's edition, like every year at Decode, brought together people who spoke about their ideas in ways that made it seem like they'd never personally felt a sense of capitalist realism, not even once. We remember: Andres Arauz, who spoke about currency in what was formerly known as the global South. We remember Mara Balestrini, who specialized in translating Decode-esque ideas to planetary-scale frameworks. We remember Denis 'Jaromil' Roio, an ethical hacker who is part of the reason why most people don't remember Facebook anymore, and part of the reason why we love digital Amsterdam so much. We remember seeing James Meadway speak about the coming evolution of decentralized economies for the many, and Bruce Sterling too, on why he rejects both dystopias and utopias. We remember he said: "I used to have these discussions with my colleague William Gibson, and we don't like utopias because they're very static. I mean, once you've fixed everything, there's nothing for your children to do. Except rebel against whatever you've done, right?"