GENERAL AND HISTORICAL POINTS ON COCS (& INTEROCC)

CoCs are the best way (we know of) to ensure reliable communication between General Assemblies.

When paired with a service like InterOccupy.org, the network of Committees of Correspondence could actually lead to the whole movement being able to come to consensus on any given action, statement, or event (even a platform).

In a movement where decisions are typically made by open General Assemblies using direct democratic processes, it really is hard to imagine how the whole movement - with hundreds or thousands of outposts - could ever manage to come to mutual agreement on anything. But that's exactly what CoCs could one day be in a position to facilitate.

Our CoCs are modeled after the original CoCs that flourished across the 13 colonies in the 1760s and 1770s. These CoCs - along with the related Committees of Safety - were a crucial part of the experiment in self-governance that led directly to the Declaration of Independence and the United States itself.

Many Americans - we call them Patriots now - had completely lost faith in British rule, so they began organizing. Local assemblies sprang up, and Committees of Correspondence soon began sending messages to each other on horseback, relaying important decisions and requests from local assembly to local assembly.

Because the original CoC members could be brutally punished, even executed, for their involvement in the movement, openness and transparency could not be practiced by the pre-Revolutionary CoCs. In many places, the CoC was the assembly

itself, not just its communication arm.

Our CoCs' main distinction from the original CoCs is that today's Occupy CoCs are interested solely in facilitating communication across the movement. CoCs do not plan events or actions (beyond, maybe, events that are intended to facilitate communication). In today's movement, General Assemblies are the primary decision-makers. CoCs just report the facts.

We say all the time that "We're just building the tracks: it's up to the movement to conduct the train." [Some prefer to say that we're the veins, or the nervous system, but I think the veins thing is gross and "nervous system" is a tad too presumptuous... I mean, it literally controls everything else in the body... not the message we want to send about InterOcc or CoCs]

It took the Founders months or years to come to agreement, with the slow, plodding technology they had available to them, but they still managed to do it. We have technology today they would have killed for.

But still the original CoCs - using horizontal communication, and spurred into action by Maryland's CoC - managed to organize the First Continental Congress, and begin the process that led to this country's founding.

So we see a huge potential in this CoC network, especially with its ability to organize through the InterOccupy webpage and conference call service. But it doesn't fully work - it doesn't give us the ability to facilitate true consensus - unless we get comprehensive coverage across the movement.

We're already in touch with dozens of CoCs - using a variety of names - all committed to the same vision of intra-movement communication and collaboration. We're finding more and getting in touch with more almost every day.

If ultimately we can help encourage the creation of a CoC at every General Assembly, and if they were all stayed in touch through InterOccupy, we could literally build national events in just a few days or weeks.

The Founders would have been so jealous.