

The Washington, D.C. Seige Has Western Roots *continued from page 8*

to Portland, Oregon, ready to brawl with locals and anti-fascists, who countered their demonstrations and often obliged their violent impulses. Members of the Three Percenters vowed to support Oregon state legislators who fled the state to avoid a vote on climate change legislation in 2019, including Sen. Brian Boquist, who said that if the state police wanted to arrest him for fleeing his legislative duties, they should “send bachelors and come heavily armed.” This summer, when protests over racial inequity spread across the nation in the wake of the killing of George Floyd by police, right-wing paramilitary groups in places like Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and Olympia, Washington, showed up in combat gear, ostensibly to keep the peace and protect property.

Recently, right-wing extremists have found a new cause: the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent public health measures, such as business closures and mask mandates. Western extremist groups like the Three Percenters and Ammon Bundy’s newly formed People’s Rights organization have been “seizing on the pandemic and trying to build political power, mainstream their beliefs and build public trust,” said Amy Herzfeld-Copple, the deputy director of the Western States Center. Ammon Bundy, who has played a prominent role in protests against public health orders, was arrested twice this summer for disrupting the Idaho Legislature.

A couple of weeks before the insurrection in Washington, D.C., demonstrators in Salem, Oregon, made a sort of watered-down test run. On December 21, protesters demonstrating against public health restrictions broke down doors at the state Capitol and attacked journalists covering their rally. Since then, reports have emerged that they gained access to the building with aid from Republican state Rep. Mike Nearman, a claim that draws comparison to accusations that federal police officials aided the crowds that entered the U.S. Senate and House. (Editor’s note: Since the original publication of this article video footage has confirmed Nearman’s role in this incident.)

This groundswell of anti-government extremism in response to Trump’s failed claims of election fraud and the coronavirus pandemic has turned the nation into a possible powder keg. “We’re likely to see the effects of their violence for years to come,” said Herzfeld-Copple. “It’s an extension of a pattern of local government

being threatened by political violence.”

While no one knows whether Trump’s departure from office will be a source of continued unrest, history clearly indicates that the threat of future violence is likely to lie in the West and its federal public lands. Biden’s pledges to act on climate change and restore Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, two national monuments that were shrunk by Trump, could be flashpoints. “By simply doing their job, the Interior Department will create more potential flashpoints,” said Aaron Weiss, the deputy director for the Center for Western Priorities. “Being good stewards means rounding Bundy cattle up. They can’t continue to coddle these extremists.”

Now, the West and rest of the country are left wondering where these tensions will flare up next. History tells us that any attempts at an ambitious federal public-land policy will be met with right-wing resistance.

And yet there are hopeful touchstones in the region, including the site of the last Bundy occupation in Burns, Oregon. Collaboration and community conversations around land management, both before and since the 2016 occupation, blunted local support for the extremists who descended on the small eastern Oregon town. According to Peter Walker, a University of Oregon geographer who chronicled the occupation and aftermath in his book *Sagebrush Collaboration: How Harney County Defeated the Takeover of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge*, one local rancher told him: “Collaboration is what inoculated us from the Bundy virus.”

“Instead of a glamorous revolution,” as promised by the Bundy-lead militants, Walker told *Oregon Quarterly*, the community embraced a less exciting, but far more democratic and peaceful approach. “Harney County (has) returned to the much less glamorous, time-consuming, sometimes tedious but often effective work of sitting across the table with people of different viewpoints to find mutually beneficial, practical solutions to shared problems.”

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¡El Amigo Mexican Food and Bakery! *continued from front page*

they purchased the Hobo Bakery business and equipment. The bakery officially opened in mid-January after a soft opening that lasted a few weeks which gave them a chance to find out what people like and what will sell. “It was just a good opportunity since we were looking to expand the food truck,” says Deysy. “We had a lot of people at the food truck asking for Mexican pastries, flan, and other desserts, but with such a small space in the truck, it was impossible to make that work. So when we heard this was available, it just all came together.”

fruit filled cakes, cookies, breads, and much more. In the summer they plan to offer frozen treats. Olivia has a lot of ideas for the future, and hopes to expand the space and even offer fresh vegetables and other market type items.

Both Teodoro and Olivia,



Teodoro Carreno runs El Amigo Mexican Food Truck.

The bakery offers a large variety of authentic Mexican sweets and pastries, including pan dulce (sweet bread), a variety of flakey pastries (including croissants), bunuelos (fried dough covered in cinnamon sugar) sweet and savory filled empanadas (like a turnover), churros (fried-dough pastry), montecadas (sweet, buttery, and dense muffin or small loaf), milhojas (a thousand layers cake), flan and tiramsu, cream and

and Nancy and Deysy, say they plan to purchase homes and settle in Vernonia. “We already feel like we are part of the community because everyone has been so welcoming since our first day,” says Nancy. “We’re so grateful for all the support we’ve been given. It really feels like we belong here.”

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