

timber payments coming in to support rural communities, the infrastructure and rural schools. It means a whole heck of a lot of counties have had to problem-solve about how to maintain as much of their infrastructure as possible. Places like Josephine County, where they haven't been able to pass any new taxes for public safety. They've had to figure out how to make do with very, very little. And it got to the point where they didn't have any sheriff's deputies, so if you would call the police for any kind of intervention, it was really not guaranteed. It got to the point where women's crisis workers were telling us stories about taking clients to court in order to get restraining orders against abusive exes and judges actually telling these battered women they should get a gun because there is actually no way of guaranteeing that their police are going to enforce these restraining orders.

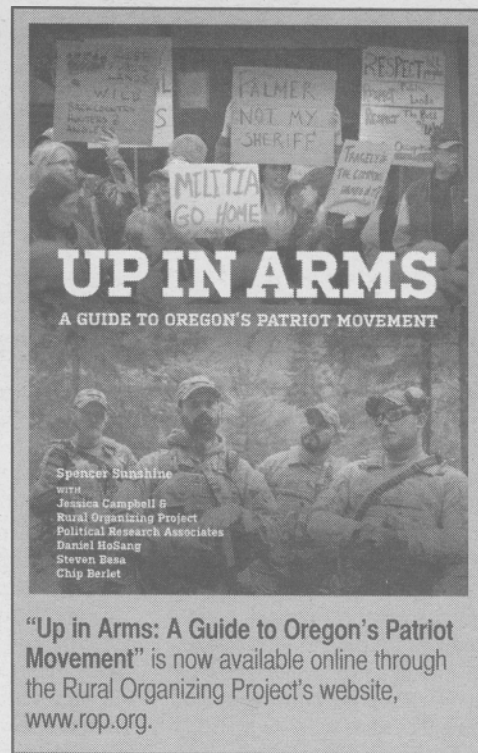
J.Z.: *Sounds like the Wild West.*

J.C.: It's the Wild West! So a lot of this real insecurity people are feeling, the Patriot movement is stepping in, saying, "Well, we could form our own infrastructure. We could do community watches and community preparedness teams." Which is smart organizing and is definitely meeting people where they're insecure. But it's really an entry point into deeper, thinly veiled white nationalist ideology, and we have heard from other communities across the state that they have been coached by these paramilitary groups first to form a community watch. Then you get an armed community watch that does active patrols. And then you patrol the national forest around you for undocumented folks cooking meth. And that's where a lot of folks go "Whoa! What's going on here? I thought this was community infrastructure. I thought this was about meeting the needs of our neighbors."

J.Z.: *Just to be a devil's advocate, while you might not agree with those views, what's the real harm in this? Where does it become a serious problem?*

J.C.: We are seeing paramilitary groups say they know who belongs and who doesn't in rural communities. I think it's a problem when groups that believe in and perpetuate xenophobic and Islamophobic conspiracy theories are acting as local police forces in communities without any kind of accountability. We've also seen these different forces that are formed and paramilitaries that are formed that say they knew who belonged and who didn't in their communities. And we have worked with communities where people of color are leaving because their children are being threatened, and when their parents try intervening, they're also threatened. They've been told that their kind aren't welcome. And this is an area where the Klan has strongholds. So there are some potential overlap there, and we really dig into that in the toolkit.

In terms of historical trends. I think the other thing that's really worth naming about this movement – and why it's a threat in Josephine County in particular, but we're seeing in other counties as well – is the Patriot leadership is actually advocating for and providing the key leadership for all of the "no new taxes" campaigns. So they are actually taking out-of-state money, in some cases, to advance a pretty regressive agenda that keeps their communities defunded, and they're doing it while they are pointing out that the county infrastructure that's being built there is failing the people and what are you supposed to do about that.



"Up in Arms: A Guide to Oregon's Patriot Movement" is now available online through the Rural Organizing Project's website, www.rop.org.

So they're helping engineer the crisis, or to maintain the crisis, so they have a pretty vulnerable base from which to recruit. It's pretty sophisticated.

J.Z.: *So out-of-state influences, much like the Bundys, are bringing bigger agendas to these small towns.*

"We've had some communities reach out to us about candidates, because it seems like the candidates are more accountable to people in Utah and these various Patriot organizations then they are to the constituency they hope to have vote for them."

J.C.: Absolutely. What we're seeing is they're attempting to run multiple candidates for all sorts of local offices, many of which are running unopposed, which is a brilliant strategy, and we're seeing a lot of these candidates get out-of-state money, which is dedicated for Patriots who are going to advance the notion of a constitutional government that refuses to engage in any kind of restriction of any Second Amendment rights, but First Amendment rights only matter for whom they like the best.

J.Z.: *What are the stories you hear from people in communities? What are they asking you for?*

J.C.: It's been a variety. We're really hearing the outcry from across the state. In Josephine County, there was a very similar standoff to what happened with the Bundys that didn't get any kind of play, really, or any national media back in April 2015.

What had happened was they had a local organization and they had some folks who were pretty savvy media spokespeople, but most of the energy and most of the people that were taking part in their so-called operation were from out of state. And in fact, they were admitting to each other that there were more people from east of the Mississippi than west, at a certain point.

J.Z.: *The mine incident?*

J.C.: The Sugar Pine Mine. It was out in unincorporated Josephine County in Galice. They also had a big armed encampment off of I-5 off the Merlin exit. They had this whole other theater going on, and part of what the community's outreach to us was the fact that there were all these social media posts with people posting photos of themselves decked out with their assault rifles and

they were writing goodbye letters to their children about daddy going to go die for liberty. And that really scared people.

Sure, Josephine County has its share of characters, but when they are your neighbors, they're accountable to you – no one wants to be a bad neighbor. But these so-called Patriots were coming in from out of state, and there were multiple vets coming in saying that they were ready to go to war, all taking orders from people no one knew. That really frightened people.

That's why we started digging into all of this to begin with. What's going on, who are these people, what do they believe, what's the vision of their community, and what do they hope to accomplish by doing all this?

And since we've started doing that, there was Malheur, and multiple other actions happening, and local organizing happening, and we had a whole heck of a lot of folks reaching out to us because now they know we're unpacking this stuff, and we had some background information. And people are seeing that a lot of these groups are actually funded from out of state.

We've had some communities reach out to us about candidates, because it seems like the candidates are more accountable to people in Utah and these various Patriot organizations then they are to the constituency they hope to have vote for them.

J.Z.: *How much of this is reflecting what's happening at the national election with the presidential election?*

J.C.: I think that it's interesting what we're seeing in Oregon. A lot of these folks are responding to the fact that people are really feeling disenfranchised and feel like political leadership doesn't have a vested interest in making sure that people's needs are being met and that people are going to be taken care of, that they are going to have some basic guarantees that they are going to have a quality of life.

We've been hearing that for a very long time in rural Oregon, that while it feels like even though we might have a blue Legislature, that political leadership has pretty much abandoned rural Oregon, and as we talk with other states, they're hearing the same thing from their constituencies as well.

J.Z.: *What do you hope people take away from this toolkit?*

J.C.: The toolkit includes a whole heck of a lot. There's a historical analysis and an economic analysis of rural Oregon right now, and then there are case studies and tools and tips for organizing on the ground.

A lot of people like to make fun of the Bundys and act like it's not a real movement. But it is a movement of people responding to the fact that people are frustrated and tired of the status quo in rural communities. People are working multiple part-time jobs and barely getting by. There are a lot of veterans who are coming back and have very little access to services and don't have access to meaningful work. And then we're seeing the suicide rate spike across the state right now. This movement is actually really moving people around their anger and frustration. I think that as progressives, there are a lot of lessons to be learned there. ROP exists because the infrastructure – and it is this way in every state – focuses on urban centers for building up political leadership and political bases, and we actually believe that we should contest for rural areas, for working-class areas, and not just let them be the uncontested base of the right.

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Before the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, there was a similar standoff at the Sugar Pine Mine in southwestern Oregon's Josephine County. The owners had a dispute with the Bureau of Land Management, which had asked the miners to file a plan of operations, or appeal, if they wanted to continue to work the claim. Instead of replying to the notice with their paperwork, the miners called in the Patriot movement activists, who flooded in from the surrounding areas and from out of state to establish armed camps.

Source: "Up in Arms: A Guide to Oregon's Patriot Movement. Rural Organizing Project"