

Report from Occupied Miwok Territory

Anonymous

2010

“We will not budge and are willing to die... Everything has been taken. This is the last.”

– Silvia Burley, CVMT chairperson

“Don’t talk about it, be about it.”

– Mos Def

Anarchists and indigenous activists from the Bay, Central Valley, Santa Cruz and Canada have gathered at a foreclosed house in Stockton which is the only property belonging to the California Valley Miwok Tribe. It’s an hour and a half into the second announced eviction date (the first was in June and sheriffs were held off by a lawsuit). The contest over the house is part of a struggle over the legal identity of the CVMT. It is also one of the first eviction resistances attempted in the U.S. since the housing market crashed, and it is happening in Stockton, CA which has been the #1 city in the U.S. for foreclosures the past 3 years running. (The Central Valley in general has been exceptionally hard hit by the foreclosure crisis.)

The CVMT has existed as a federally recognized tribe (i.e., technically a part of the federal government) since 1915. The tribe existed as a mere formality, without organization or land, until the late 1970s when a number of young activists inspired by the burgeoning indigenous movement of those years began the process of building an actual tribal government organization which can obtain and disburse federal funds and other services. It has been a long slow process but the CVMT has managed to obtain food, housing, environmental protection and other aid for some of its members.

In the past few years, the tribe’s funding stream has been frozen. A development corporation which owns a chain of casinos in Nevada and major housing development concerns in California has hired a front group of thugs and assorted scumbags to intimidate the existing tribal members and take control of the tribal government, with the goal of building a casino. Casinos represent the most crude monetization of the land rights and sovereignty that tribal governments represent. It’s also worth noting that four major “gaming tribes” in southern California hog most of the federal funds available to the state’s 108 recognized tribes (many of which are landless).

There is a very long story here about the BIA, the developer, and the various connections between businesses and government agencies involved. (see the CVMT website) The point that

really resonates here though, is that a group of people are drawing a line and standing their ground against the forces of capital. Our homes, our futures, and our lives will not be taken away without resistance. We are not few enough to be easily pried apart. Today, anarchists resisting foreclosure will stand with indigenous people resisting disconnection from their territory. And tomorrow? The occupants of this house are prepared to keep out the sheriffs, the developers' thugs and anyone else that tries to fuck with us. If the house can be held until Feb. 9 there is a court date which may release funds to the tribe and save the house, so it would be concretely really helpful for more people to join the resisters here. It would also be awesome if more people started occupying foreclosed houses, resisting eviction, and occupying fucking everything.

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