

## Economic Restructuring and Globalization Tour

This tour illustrates the changing nature of the Los Angeles economy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as the city has transformed from a vibrant hub of high-wage, often unionized manufacturing to a site of low-wage manufacturing, high-end and low-end service work, and global circuits of multinational finance, production, labor, and migration.

Begin in the morning at the **FIRESTONE TIRE AND RUBBER** plant (2323–2525 Firestone Blvd., South Gate 90280), a factory built in 1928 that once employed 2,500 well-paid, unionized workers. This plant represents the heyday of manufacturing in Los Angeles from the 1920s through the 1960s, when hundreds of factories dominated the landscape of this area and a strong working-class culture developed. The whole complex is still intact, and it now houses the South Gate Industrial Park and the South Gate Community Adult School, both of which represent Los Angeles' new manufacturing economy (which is predominantly low-wage, nonbenefited), as well as, in the case of the adult school, a collaboration between city governments and industry to prepare workers for such jobs.

From Firestone, walk or drive east on Firestone Boulevard for approximately one-half mile to the former site of the **TRIANON BALLROOM** (2800 Firestone Blvd., South Gate 90280), a dusty lot at the time of this writing, but once a thriving ballroom where working-class migrants from the Midwest

(especially young single women) who worked at the area's manufacturing plants gathered for music, dancing, and socializing. Take the time to examine the contemporary industrial landscape along the way. Since the closure of Firestone and other branch plants in the 1970s and 1980s, most of the factories in this area now employ nonunionized workers, who are paid low wages to produce and assemble furniture, apparel, or electronics. The area's many warehouses coordinate shipping from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to the Inland Empire and beyond.

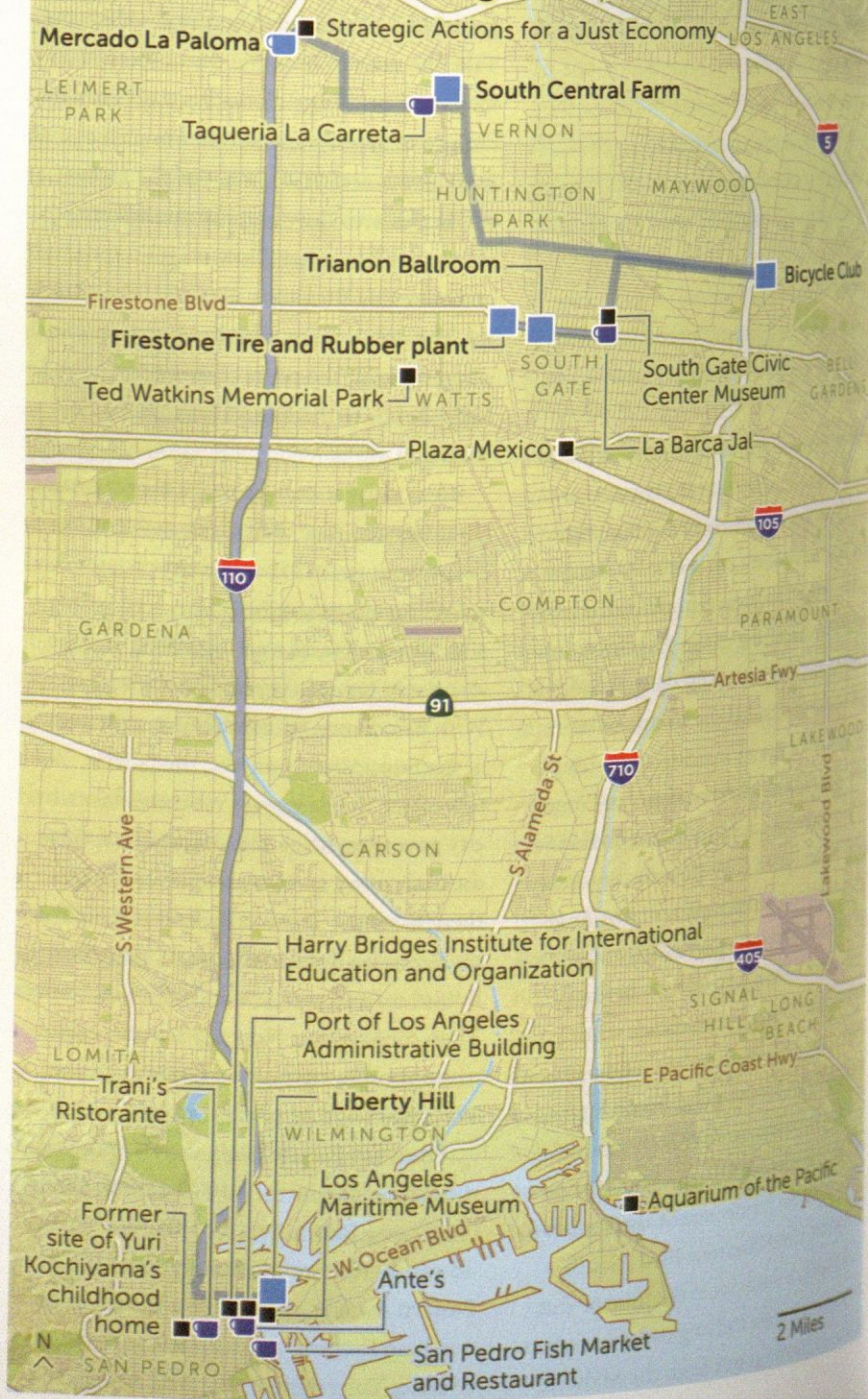
Next, drive 4.6 miles to the **BICYCLE CLUB** (7301 Eastern Ave., Bell Gardens 90201), a casino built in 1984 that the city promised would revitalize southeast L.A.'s economy after the decline of manufacturing and the associated loss of corporate tax revenues. With its reliance on gambling as a strategy of economic development, the Bicycle Club represents the desperate measures taken by city governments in the aftermath of deindustrialization and Proposition 13. To get there from the Trianon Ballroom, head east on Firestone Boulevard toward Long Beach Boulevard and turn left at California Avenue. Then turn right at Florence Avenue, and make another right, onto Eastern Avenue. The casino will be on your right.

From the Bicycle Club, drive 7 miles to the former site of the **SOUTH CENTRAL FARM** (4100 Long Beach Ave., Los Angeles 90058). To get there, continue briefly south on Eastern Avenue, then make a U-turn to go north on Eastern, and turn left at Florence Avenue. Turn right at Alameda Street. The



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former South Central Farm will be on your right. At the South Central Farm, immigrant workers—a great many of whom were and are employed in south and southeast L.A.'s contemporary manufacturing economy—created a community farm to grow food and medicinal plants that would supplement their low wages and lack of health insurance. The farmers situated their presence and occupation of public land within larger processes of labor migration compelled by free-trade policies such as NAFTA and the dislocation of poor people from the land in Mexico and Central America. The farmers were forcibly evicted in 2006 by L.A. County sheriff's deputies on behalf of a wealthy industrial property owner, whose ownership of the land was hotly disputed and perhaps illegal—and who has proposed to build yet another warehouse or truck-switching facility on the site.

For lunch, head to the Mercado La Paloma (3655 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles 90007; 213-748-1963; [www.mercadolapaloma.com](http://www.mercadolapaloma.com)), approximately 2.8 miles from the South Central Farm. Go south on Alameda toward Vernon Avenue, turn right on Vernon, then turn right on Avalon Boulevard. Make a left onto Jefferson Boulevard and another left onto Grand Avenue. The Mercado will be on your right. There is pay parking right in front of the Mercado, or free parking on the streets nearby or in the adjacent Department of Motor Vehicles parking lot. The Mercado is a small business incubator that seeks to address high rates of poverty by creating healthy economic development strategies, as opposed to gambling or other

extractive and socially damaging industries. Restaurant options include several regional varieties of Mexican food (Oaxacan, Yucatecan), Thai, and North American foods, as well as an excellent *panaderia*; several craft vendors also sell their goods here. You may also wish to stop by Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (152 W. 32nd St., Los Angeles 90007; 213-745-9961; [www.saje.net](http://www.saje.net)), a community organization housed in a former garment sweatshop that is spearheading community-led economic justice initiatives. To get there, just continue north on Grand Avenue, pass Jefferson, and turn right on Thirty-second Street. Since this is a busy office and workspace, be sure to call ahead to find out if any events are happening, arrange to volunteer, or schedule a meeting with staff.

Spend the afternoon in the harbor area, about 20 miles south of central Los Angeles, where you can visit numerous places that bear witness to Los Angeles' immensely important role in the globalization of manufacturing and trade. Your first stop in the harbor area is **LIBERTY HILL** (100 W. 5th St., San Pedro 90731), the site of a critically important struggle in 1923 to protect freedoms of speech and assembly, and one that was key to the eventual birth of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). From Mercado La Paloma or SAJE, follow street signs to find your way to CA-110 south. The freeway will end. Then turn left on Gaffey, left at West First Street, and right at Harbor Boulevard. The site of the 1923 strike and struggle will be on your right. Within a very short walking distance are the



Port of Los Angeles Administrative Building (425 S. Palos Verdes St., San Pedro 90731) and Harry Bridges Institute (350 W. 5th St., San Pedro 90731; 310-831-2397; [www.harrybridges.com](http://www.harrybridges.com)). To get to both from Liberty Hill, walk west on Fifth Street toward Palos Verdes Street (one block); you'll see the administrative building on the corner to your left. Continue walking west on Fifth Street about one more block to the Bridges Institute, where you can check out its outstanding labor history library and video collection. Be sure to verify that the timing is right: the Bridges Institute is open Monday through Thursday 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

While in the harbor area, you may wish to take a highly recommended urban ocean boat cruise (Saturdays and Sundays at 4 P.M. in the summer months; \$29.95 adults, \$10 children), offered by the Aquarium of the Pacific. The tour lasts 2½ hours and considers the interplay between trade and manufacturing and the ocean habitat in the port area. You can purchase tickets online or at the aquarium.

Complete your day with dinner in San Pedro. We recommend the San Pedro Fish Market and Restaurant (Ports O' Call Marketplace, Berth 78, 1190 Nagoya Way, San Pedro 90731; 310-832-4251; [www.sanpedrofishmarket.com](http://www.sanpedrofishmarket.com)) or, for something more upscale, Trani's Ristorante (584 W. 9th St., San Pedro 90731; 310-832-1220; [www.jtrani.com](http://www.jtrani.com)), which specializes in Italian food, or Ante's (729 S. Ante Perkov Way, San Pedro 90731; 310-832-5375; [www.antesrestaurant.com](http://www.antesrestaurant.com)), for Croatian.

## New Organizing Tour

Contemporary Los Angeles is the hub of some of the most dynamic and innovative labor organizing in the country. Since the 1980s, deindustrialization and the increasingly footloose nature of global capital have caused organized labor to reassess its traditional focus on factories and white male workers. Labor leaders have turned their attention instead to the service sector, especially restaurants, hospitality and tourism, and healthcare—all of which are major pillars of L.A.'s contemporary economy—and to the infrastructures and civic resources used by working-class people. Because L.A.'s service industry workforce has grown more diverse in the past half century and includes many Asian and Latina/o immigrants, organizers have also recognized the need to explicitly and actively work across racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural lines—which have historically hindered many unionization campaigns—to build strong alliances. This labor organizing is complemented by an array of social justice organizations centered on issues such as transportation, environmental justice, prison abolition, and youth empowerment. Frequently, organizers connect the struggles of immigrant workers and people of color in Los Angeles with those of people across the region and even around the globe. All of these dynamics are characteristic of the style of labor organizing called the "new organiz-