

SAVE THE SOUTH CENTRAL FARM!

We stand today in solidarity with the subsistence farmers of the South Central Farm in Los Angeles, who in the early morning of Tuesday, June 13th, had their land seized by an army of police in riot gear. At least 50 people were arrested in the siege, clearing the way for a dismal march of bulldozers to level the 14 acres of blooming food and medicine for the future installation of yet another industrial warehouse - most likely a Wal-Mart. This attack on the poor immigrant community of South Central LA will demolish a primary food source of well over 350 families.

South Central Los Angeles is an area of concentrated poverty and street violence surrounded by a concrete-and-steel industrial desert, choked with pollution and littered with automobiles, warehouses, factories, and razor-wire. It is almost unbearable to walk the streets. Amidst this desolation, The Farm is a stunning oasis of beauty and life, a vibrant community of family and friends meeting their needs directly by growing their traditional foods - endless varieties of vegetables, fruit trees, medicinal herbs, creepers, crawlers, and cacti. Many of the farmers' seeds are family heirlooms that have been saved over countless generations, dating back thousands of years to native ancestral crops of the Americas.

The farm was born in the wake of the Rodney King riots of 1992, when the disputed area of land was offered to neighborhood residents as a site to establish community gardens. In the last 14 years, with love and pride, the self-organized farmworkers have transformed a scarred 14 acres that resembled a city dump into rich and fertile soil, divided into 360 unique garden plots. For these people, mostly immigrants from Mexico with farming



and ranching backgrounds, growing food is vital to survival - not only for the obvious element of sustenance, but as an integral part of who they are. Displaced from their homelands by economic conditions, these immigrant farmers have succeeded in making place, in finding home in a time of universal dispossession, and moving towards self-reliance.

In 2002, developer Ralph Horowitz and his financial partners bought the property from the City of LA in a back-room deal for 4.5 million, which launched a four year struggle to save the farmland. There has been a protracted, losing

legal battle and attempts to purchase the land. The \$16 million price tag that Horowitz set was recently met by the farmers and supporting organizations - but Horowitz refused to negotiate at the last minute. For the past three weeks, farmers and supporters from all over the world were occupying the site 24-hours-a-day to delay and deter the police raid. At 5 am on Wednesday morning, hundreds of police in full riot gear surrounded the farm and turned the community's nightmare into a reality.

Today's corporations and governments claim to offer us "freedom" and "security." But in an increasingly toxic and unlivable world, it is clear that those in power can only give us more of the same degradations and disasters. Our face-to-face communities, our ability to organize and feed ourselves, and the wealth of our imaginations are our greatest strength and security.

While there are many specific "issues" at hand in this tragedy, the fundamental conflict is between the values of the land (community, sustainability, autonomy) and the values of capitalist society (private property, profit, and power). Living garden or sterile supermarket? This is the question we face.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Since the raid, there has been an ongoing 24 hour vigil in the streets next to the farm. Legal avenues are being pursued to try to secure some of the remaining land of the farm or obtain land elsewhere for a new farm. There are now many families who have lost their gardens and will be in need of support. Keep updated by reading the websites listed below.

"We are continuing to stand strong with tears in our eyes. It is not over yet!"

1. Call the Mayor, Jan Perry, Horowitz, and Sheriffs: Jan Perry 323-846-2651 or 213-473-7009; Mayor Villaraigosa 213-978-0600, Ralph Horowitz office 310 440-7878.

2. Donate money to the South Central Farmers' towards purchasing the farm. If the land can't be bought your money will be returned.

3. Learn more about the history and ongoing farmers' struggle at these websites:

[- southcentralfarmers.org] [- southcentralfarmers.com] (the .com and .org are different)
[- la.indymedia.org] [- indybay.org/santacruz/] SCF Hotline: 1-888-SCFARM-1



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