



History of Women in the Labor Movement in California, 1991, by Eva Cockcroft, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, 6120 South Vermont Ave., South L.A.

The history of women in the labor movement was a subject I had wanted to paint for a long time. I almost did it in New York, for Local 1199, but at the last minute the project fell through. When I came to California in 1989, I continued to look for an appropriate site. A friend introduced me to the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, a private library that is home to books and archives about labor and progressive movements. It was a perfect fit. The library was enthusiastic about the idea and I began to apply for grants. After two years without any luck, I decided to fund it myself. I was teaching two days a week—the rest of the time, I worked on the wall.

The mural honors both anonymous women workers and important organizers. It contains portraits of political and labor organizer Dorothy Healy (left); International Ladies Garment Workers Union leader Rose Pesotta (center left); Charlotta Bass, publisher of *The California Eagle* who fought for civil rights and jobs for World War II workers (center); United Farm Workers Vice President Dolores Huerta; and agricultural workers leader Luisa Moreno (center right). I was painting in the aftermath of the Rodney King beating and the background scene of police beating strikers (based on a 1930s photograph) seemed particularly apt. During the riots that followed the verdict, the liquor store across the street was torched, but the mural was not touched.

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