

FIERRO, JOSEFINA (1914–1998)

Josefina Fierro was born into a heritage of revolutionary activism in Mexicali, Baja California. Following high school graduation Fierro moved to California and became politically involved defending immigrants and Mexican American civil rights. Along with other Latino leaders, she soon led a broad based movement to end discrimination against Mexican Americans. Fierro participated in the founding of the civil rights group, el Congreso de Pueblos de Hablan Española, and played a key role on the defense committee of the Sleepy Lagoon case. By the mid-1940s, Fierro's intervention in Washington, D.C. virtually ended unprovoked assaults on Mexican American in East L.A. and downtown Los Angeles in the Zoot Suit Riots, but she was labeled a Communist by the California Committee on Un-American Activities in 1948. Hounded by the FBI, and on the verge of deportation, Fierro decided to leave the U.S. to live in the city of Guaymas in Mexico where she stayed for the rest of her life.