



# Power Politics: Environmental Activism in South Los Angeles

*Karen Brodkin*

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In the late 1990s, when California's deregulation of the production and sale of electric power created massive energy shortages, a group of environmental justice activists blocked construction of a power plant in their working-class Mexican and Central American neighborhoods. Why did they choose this battle? And how did the largely high school student activists come to prevail in the face of statewide political opinion?

*Power Politics* is a rich and readable study of a grassroots campaign where longtime labor and environmental allies found themselves on opposite sides of a conflict that pitted good jobs against good air. Karen Brodkin analyzes how those issues came to be opposed and in doing so unpacks the racial and class dynamics that shape Americans' grasp of labor and environmental issues. *Power Politics'* activists stood at the forefront of a movement that is building broad-based environmental coalitions and placing social justice at the heart of a new and robust vision.



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