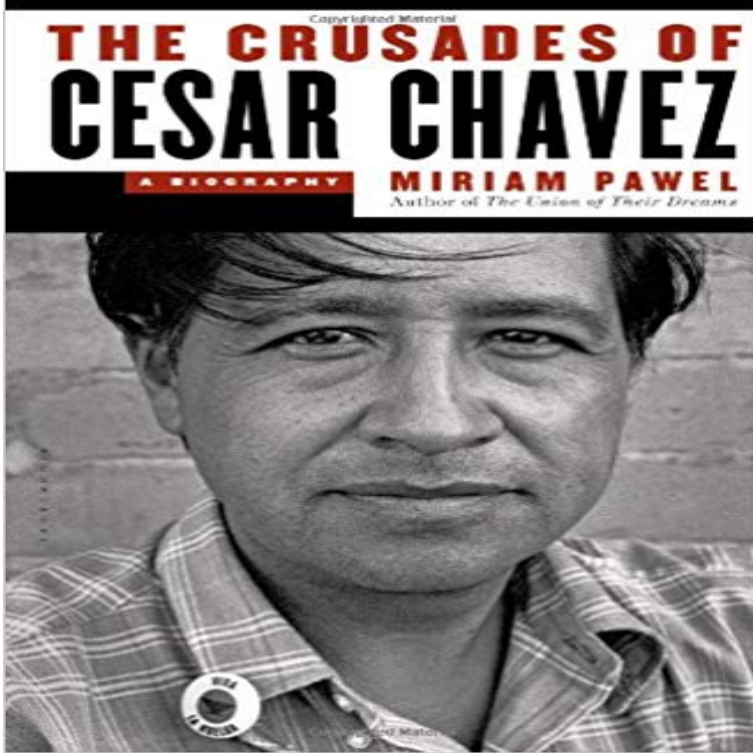


The Crusades of Cesar Chavez: A Biography



Cesar Chavez founded a labor union, launched a movement, and inspired a generation. He rose from migrant worker to national icon, becoming one of the great charismatic leaders of the 20th century. Two decades after his death, Chavez remains the most significant Latino leader in US history. Yet his life story has been told only in hagiography until now. In the first comprehensive biography of Chavez, Miriam Pawel offers a searching yet empathetic portrayal. Chavez emerges here as a visionary figure with tragic flaws; a brilliant strategist who sometimes stumbled; and a canny, streetwise organizer whose pragmatism was often at odds with his elusive, soaring dreams. He was an experimental thinker with eclectic passions—an avid, self-educated historian and a disciple of Gandhian non-violent protest. Drawing on thousands of documents and scores of interviews, this superbly written life deepens our understanding of one of Chavezs most salient qualities: his profound humanity. Pawel traces Chavezs remarkable career as he conceived strategies that empowered the poor and vanquished Californias powerful agriculture industry, and his later shift from inspirational leadership to a cult of personality, with tragic consequences for the union he had built. *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez* reveals how this most unlikely American hero ignited one of the great social movements of our time.

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