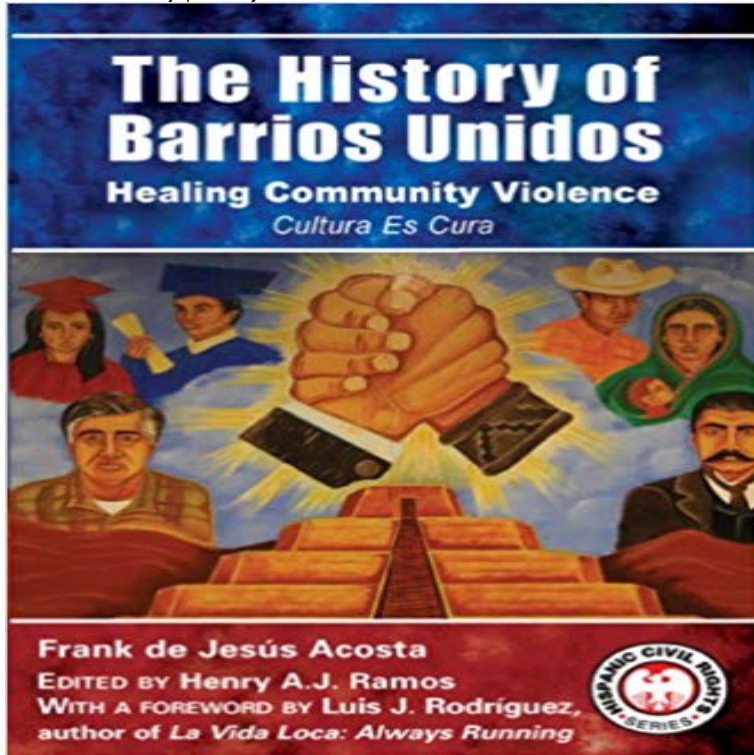


The History of Barrios Unidos: Healing Community Violence (Hispanic Civil Rights)



This is the compelling story of Barrios Unidos, the Santa Cruz-based organization founded to prevent gang violence amongst inner-city ethnic youth. An evolving grass-roots organization that grew out of the Mexican-American civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Barrios Unidos harnessed the power of culture and spirituality to rescue at-risk young people, provide avenues to quell gang warfare, and offer a promising model for building healthy and vibrant multicultural communities. Co-founder Daniel Nane Alejandre spent his childhood following the crops from state to state with his family. His earliest recollection of home was a tent in a labor camp. Later, he was drafted in to the Army and sent to Vietnam. Flying bullets, cries of anguish and being surrounded by death have a way of giving fuel to epiphany. This war made as little sense to me as the war raging on the streets of the barrios back home. He decided that when he returned home, he would dedicate himself to peace. Nane Alejandre's story of personal transformation, from heroin-addicted gang banger to social activist and youth advocate, is closely tied to that of Barrios Unidos. Through interviews, written testimonies, and documents, Frank de Jesus Acosta re-constructs the development of Barrios Unidos--or literally, united neighborhoods--from its early influences and guiding principles to its larger connection to the on-going struggle to achieve civil rights in America. Today, Barrios Unidos chapters exist in several cities around the country, including San Francisco; Venice-Los Angeles; Salinas; San Diego; Washington, DC; Yakima; San Antonio; Phoenix; and Chicago. With a foreword by Luis Rodriguez, former gang member and author of *La Vida Loca: Always Running*, the book also includes historical photos and commentaries by leading civil rights activists Harry

Belafonte, Dolores Huerta, Tom Hayden, Manuel Pastor, and Constance Rice. Mandatory reading for anyone interested in peace and social justice, The History of Barrios Unidos gives voice to contemporary inter-generational leaders of color and will lead to the continuation of necessary public dialogue about racism, poverty, and violence.

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