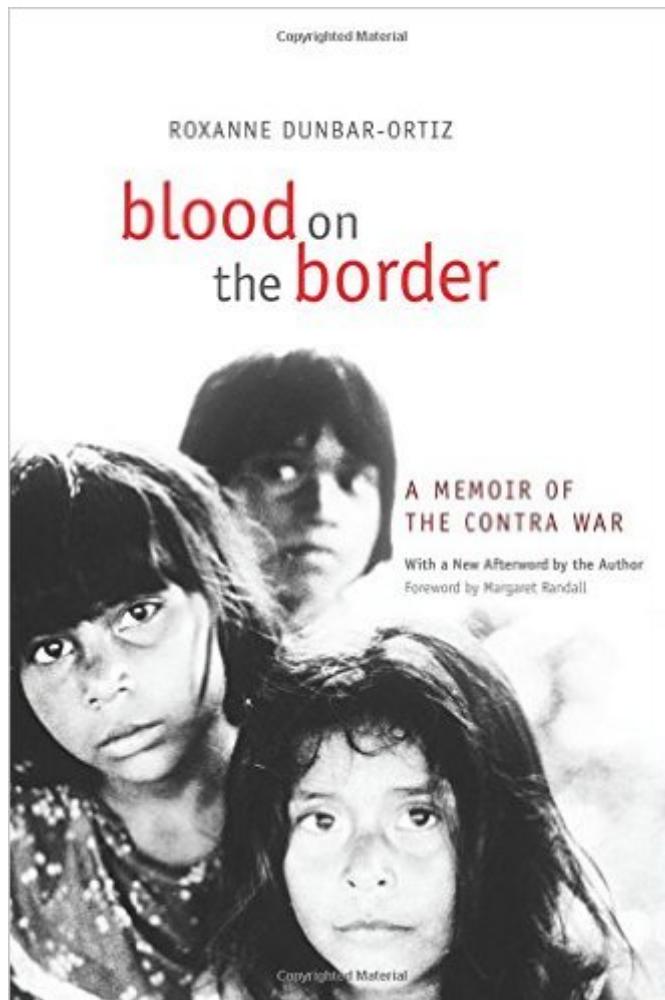


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Blood On The Border: A Memoir Of The Contra War



Synopsis

Human rights activist and historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz has been described as "a force of nature on the page and off." That force is fully present in *Blood on the Border*, the third in her acclaimed series of memoirs. Seamlessly blending the personal and the political, *Blood on the Border* is Dunbar-Ortiz's firsthand account of the decade-long dirty war pursued by the Contras and the United States against the people of Nicaragua. With the 1981 bombing of a Nicaraguan plane in Mexico City—a plane Dunbar-Ortiz herself would have been on if not for a delay—the US-backed Contras (short for los contrarrevolucionarios) launched a major offensive against Nicaragua's Sandinista regime, which the Reagan administration labeled as communist. While her rich political analysis of the US-Nicaraguan relationship bears the mark of a trained historian, Dunbar-Ortiz also writes from her perspective as an intrepid activist who spent months at a time throughout the 1980s in the war-torn country, especially in the remote northeastern region, where the Indigenous Miskitu people were relentlessly assailed and nearly wiped out by CIA-trained Contra mercenaries. She makes painfully clear the connections between what many US Americans today remember only vaguely as the Iran-Contra affair—and ongoing US aggression in the Americas, the Middle East, and around the world—connections made even more explicit in a new afterword written for this edition. A compelling, important, and sobering story on its own, *Blood on the Border* offers a deeply informed, closely observed, and heartfelt view of history in the making.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz has a remarkable ability to tell her personal story in a broader historical context--the mark, I suppose, of a good memoir. This is her third such volume. The first, RED DIRT: GROWING UP OKIE, is still my favorite, but that may just be in part because I have the experience of trying to be a radical in Oklahoma. That book traces her life from poor, part Native American roots to 60s radicalism (including wonderful stories about her Wobbly--IWW, International Workers of the World--grandfather. The second volume, OUTLAW WOMAN: A MEMOIR OF THE WAR YEARS, 1960-1975, focused on Dunbar-Ortiz's involvement in the anti-Vietnam War movement and the feminist movement. Now, she has completed the series (but not, hopefully, the peace and justice work she so obviously passionately believes in) with BLOOD ON THE BORDER: A MEMOIR OF THE CONTRA WAR. Dunbar-Ortiz is brutally honest about the problems in her life, including relationships and alcoholism. She is also brutally honest about the role of US imperialism in Latin America. Just one of the revelations for me was the recycling of figures from this era such as Negroponte by the current Bush. This is a very interesting, even important book. Read it. And weep? For Dunbar-Ortiz sounds a bit pessimistic at the end, one might say. "Nicaragua was the last great hope for national liberation movements to succeed in breaking free from imperialism," she writes. But she continues (and concludes the book): "The historical process of nation building that occurred with the rise of capitalism in Western Europe has reached its limits.

A Review of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's Blood on the Border
Contraindications
By RON JACOBSTO

To many of us in the United States, the US contra war against the Nicaraguan government in the 1980s seems like very long ago. Since the CIA-manufactured defeat of the revolutionary government in Managua--a defeat that included mercenary war, media manipulations, CIA and Special Forces covert ops, drug-running and arms smuggling by people paid by the US government, and a sham election staged by Washington--the US has militarily invaded Iraq twice, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan. A mere three months before that sham election, Washington invaded and overthrew the Panamanian government as if warning Nicaraguans what was in store for them should they vote against the US-sponsored candidates. In addition, Washington has instigated and assisted regime change in El Salvador, several countries in the former Soviet Bloc, and a few nations in Latin America, to name just a few regions of the world that come immediately to mind. Besides these "successes", Washington has failed to overthrow the Bolivarian government in Venezuela or the governments of its eternal enemies--Cuba and northern Korea. One can be certain, however, that these attempts are ongoing. On top of all this, Washington has forced so-called free trade agreements on most countries around the world, especially those in what global capitalists like to

call the developing word. These agreements are designed, of course, to maintain Washington and Wall Street's neocolonial hold. Given all of this, it is good to see Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's latest effort *Blood on the Border* hit the bookstores.

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