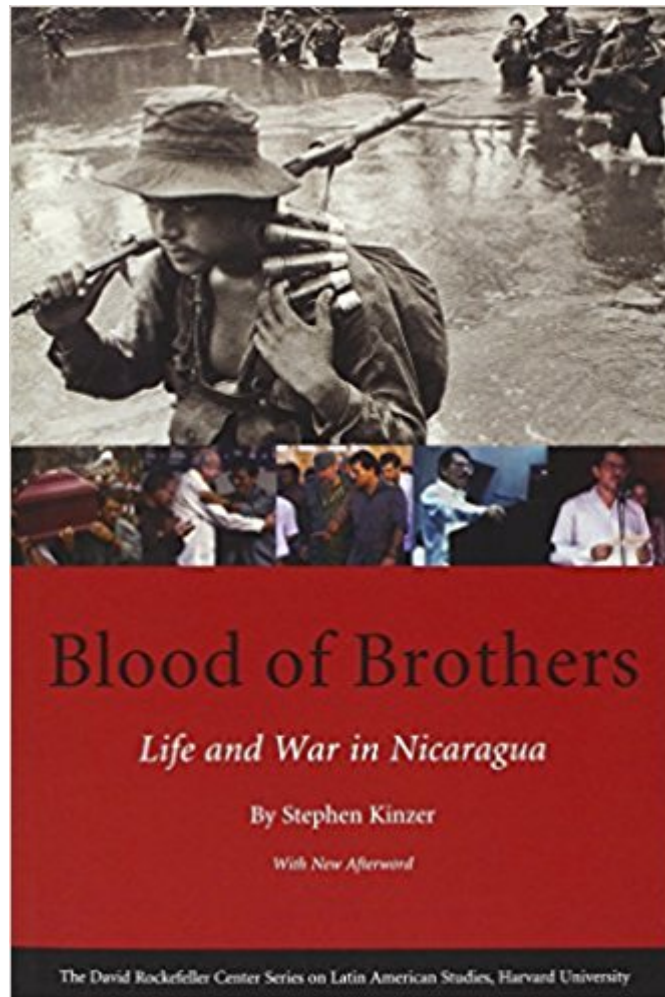


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# Blood Of Brothers: Life And War In Nicaragua, With New Afterword (Series On Latin American Studies)



## Synopsis

In 1976, at age twenty-five, Stephen Kinzer arrived in Nicaragua as a freelance journalist--and became a witness to history. He returned many times during the years that followed, becoming Latin America correspondent for the Boston Globe in 1981 and joining the foreign staff of the New York Times in 1983. That year he opened the New York Times Managua bureau, making that newspaper the first daily in America to maintain a full-time office in Nicaragua. Widely considered the best-connected journalist in Central America, Kinzer personally met and interviewed people at every level of the Somoza, Sandinistas and contra hierarchies, as well as dissidents, heads of state, and countless ordinary citizens throughout the region. *Blood of Brothers* is Kinzer's dramatic story of the centuries-old power struggle that burst into the headlines in 1979 with the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship. It is a vibrant portrait of the Nicaraguan people and their volcanic land, a cultural history rich in poetry and bloodshed, baseball and insurrection.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was a foreign correspondent in Nicaragua for much of the period covered by Kinzer's book. Typically, American correspondents came and went every couple of years; Kinzer was there before the victory of the 1979 revolution and stayed to the end of a most bloody chapter in this country's history. I do not believe anyone has captured better the strange, almost surreal beauty of this land nor the full horror of the bloodbath it had suffered by the end of the 1980s. Those looking for

finger-pointing and the moral of the story will be disappointed; but what Kinzer depicts is the truth, a harsh one for all involved.

...the late 1970's-1980's period. I read this book after having spent time in Central America myself. I think Steven did a wonderful job of telling the truth about what happened in Nicaragua during the years he was there. He showed where the Sandinistas failed, and where the U.S. government failed the people of Nicaragua. Throughout the whole book he really made the reader aware of the stories that these people lived out; from an engineer from Portland, Oregon going down to help out, to the children in the hospitals suffering from war wounds. There is a large amount of history, personal experience, and cultural images to be gained from reading by book.

Being a refugee who left the country as a child I never got an unbiased look at what really happened until I read this amazing book. It starts off before the takeover of the country by the communist Sandinistas to after the stunning election over a decade later. Stephen Kizer describes thrilling journeys where bombs go off at news conferences and clandestine stumblings into a contra camp. This book has humor (Rice for Peace?!), sadness (the 30,000 faceless people who died in the middle), to the mystical (a fair and poignant treatment of the Miskito Indians). Also the book details the visit of the Pope to Nicaragua which would headline news for various reasons as well as singer Kris Kristofferson (!) lending support to the Sandinista regime whose leaders soon afterwards head off to friendly nations of Libya and the Soviet Union. This book could almost be described as the definitive encyclopedia of information but it's so much more: If my family hadn't lived through it it would almost read as a spy novel. There is also plenty of photos showing the major players of the conflict as well as personal photos of the author.

I was introduced to Stephen Kinzer's work by an Iranian (said he was really Persian) shopkeeper after we had some long conversations while buying a rug. I purchased a copy of *All the Shah's Men* by his recommendation and a rug. Later I bought *Overthrow* and then found an old copy of *Bitter Fruit*. I recently returned from a trip to Nicaragua and bought a copy of Susan Meiselas' Nicaragua photos and the subsequent film she made. That led me to purchasing Kinzer's *Blood of Brothers* which I thoroughly enjoyed. *Blood of Brothers* gave me a real feel for the country I was visiting and some insight into who the people are and what they have been through. I'm amazed, as a Norteamericano, that I was so well received in Nicaragua. Kinzer's books are informative and his journalistic writing style gives a security that he is doing his best to tell an accurate story without any

particular position. It is sad that our government doesn't seem capable of learning from the past. I watched a CNN special on Cambodia and a couple of quotes from Francois Pouchand tell the truth as ugly as it is. "The governments did not react. You know, countries don't defend human rights. They are always subservient to politics". "Governments are cold beasts looking out for their own interests". I love my country but our foreign policies are no better than any other country. We may profess democracy and freedom but in the end we support, with might and force, the narrow interest of a few. Usually those narrow interests are not those of the American people nor the people being crushed in various countries. I'd recommend all of Kinzer's works.

I agree with much of the previous reviews-- a very thorough and rich account with nice flourishes of history and culture as well. I learned a lot. I did find, however, especially in the second half of the book, a pattern of blaming Sandinista policies without the caveat that these policies were driven by the Contra War. For example, Kinzer repeatedly says the economy is crashing due to the Sandinistas' failed economic policies, but hardly mentions the US trade embargo, which had a huge impact (arguably more than the war itself). The shortages caused by the embargo figure prominently in other first-hand accounts of life in Managua in the 1980s. In Kinzer's Afterword, he fails to mention on-going US confrontation wrt to Nicaragua, such as the Helms Amendment, requiring Nicaragua to essentially pay reparations to former Guardsmen (now "American citizens") who lost their property in the Revolution. Even Obama continues to enforce this requirement today.

Good comprehensive book on the causes and outcomes of Revolution in Nicaragua. Does a pretty good job of not taking sides. Kinzer was bureau chief in Nicaragua for the New York Times during the 80's. He sheds light on a lot of the hypocrisies and contradictions the CIA, Contras and Sandinistas were all guilty of. Not for the Radical Sandinista or Reactionary Conservative

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