

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK BEAT

Blood and Belonging

Journeys Into the New Nationalism

Ignatieff, Michael. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys Into the New Nationalism*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux; 1995. Paperback: 276 pages. ISBN-10: 0374524483 and ISBN-13:978-0374524487.

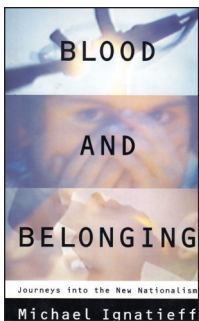
Review by COL (Ret) Warner "Rocky" D. Farr, MD, MPH

Before the Cold War ended, the politics of national identity were mostly overshadowed by the bipolar super power world and were confined to isolated incidents of ethnic strife and civil war in faraway, not much reported on, countries. After the collapse of Communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the progression of Cold War East–West relations, a surge of nationalism seems to have swept the world. In *Blood and Belonging*, Michael Ignatieff, an international journalist, examines why blood ties in regions as varied as Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Kurdistan, Northern Ireland, Quebec, Germany, and the former Soviet republics all could describe the definitive factor in modern international relations today. He explores how ethnic pride morphs into ethnic cleansing, whether modern citizens can abandon a warring past, and why a people want a national state of their own. More and more, post–Cold War armed struggle seems to be in vogue and seems to begin to be more justified.

To understand this current upstroke in nationalist tension, terror, and balkanization, Ignatieff traveled to war-torn countries (Yugoslavia) and then to reunited

countries like Germany, Ukraine, Quebec, Kurdistan, and Northern Ireland. He argues that nationalism can be either a constructive, binding force or a “collective escape from reality, whose adherents, inhabiting a delusional realm of noble causes and tragic sacrifice, strait jacket themselves and other groups in the fiction of an irreducible ethnic identity.” He gives a firsthand look inside a Kurdish guerrilla camp in northern Iraq; a meeting with a neo-Nazi skinhead in Leipzig, Germany; an interview with an octogenarian Yugoslav dissident; and an encounter with the Cree Indians of northern Canada. The Cree are adding their voices to the separatist calls of French-speaking Quebecois by demanding self-determination in an effort to stave off encroaching hydroelectric development. The Quebecois are demanding self-determination from Canada while the Cree within Quebec are demanding self-determination from Quebec, and separatist Quebec is saying no!

As *Special Forces* looks at resurrecting the unconventional warfare business, this exploration of nationalism in the post–Cold War era is a great read. Modern nationalism and its often-brutal results provide good studies about what invokes and inspires a guerrilla movement. The author provides a good reading list as an appendix. Published in 1995, this book is findable as a used book on the Internet.





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