ISSN: 2664-8148 (Online)

**Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
International Journal (LASSIJ)**

<https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/3.2.4>

Vol. 3, No. 2, (July-December) 2019, i-ii

<https://www.ideapublishers.org/lassij>

Book Review

The Fires of Spring: A Post-Arab Spring Journey through the Turbulent New Middle East - Turkey, Iraq, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. By Shelly Culbertson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016, 384 pages.

Sania Zehraa

Department of Politics and IR, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Received: January 23, 2020

Published Online: April 21, 2020

.....

The Fire of Spring, written by Shelly Culbertson in 2016, interprets the writer's journey through six countries of the Middle East and North Africa - Turkey, Iraq, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia - and tries to understand the political revolutions of 2011 that are called "Arab Spring". Her book consists of visits to historical sites and interviews of bloggers, taxi drivers, businessmen, government officials, poets and activists. The author starts where it all began in Tunisia, which can resist the turmoil of Arab spring better than most countries in the region. She delves in the rich history of the Middle East and at the same time sheds light on pain and suffering of the people.

Shelly Culbertson is a senior researcher in RAND Corporation's policy. Her research focus includes refugees, education, workforce development, international development and the Middle East. Earlier, she worked at the U.S. State Department on the Turkey Desk, and at LMI Government Consulting. She did B.S. in mathematics and political science from the University of Pittsburgh and a master's degree from Princeton University. She has lived, worked, and traveled widely in the Middle East. Her commentaries about the Middle East have appeared in Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report, on CNN.com.

Tunisia was the motivation when in January of that year, the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi touched off national turmoil, and a genuine insurgency at that point shook Egypt with the oust of a long-running tyrant. The creator's interested decision of non-Arab Turkey underscores the significant and disrupting changes in the locale that mirror the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire toward the finish of World War I.

Undoubtedly, she sets, the battle for the arrangement of genuine country states started at that point, joined by "an upset story of populace swaps, ethnic purifying, iron-fisted tyrants, common wars, and well known kickback," all setting up an example like what is happening in these nations today. In the wake of exhibiting a diagram of perceptions about the district overall—remembering the accentuation for the area's assorted variety, the battle to portray Islam's job in government, adjusting the cutting edge versus the past, the liberation of ladies, and the consideration of the mind-boggling energetic segment—Culbertson investigates every nation thus and asks the individuals included what the unrest accomplished for them.

The appropriate responses shift broadly: Egypt, having slipped once more into tyranny, is the awful model, but Egyptian ladies are driving the route in requesting change; Tunisia remains

the blemished model for accommodating the mainstream and the strict; Iraq, assailed by the Islamic State gathering, takes steps to fragment; pioneering Jordan has demonstrated shockingly stable regardless of its monstrous outcast emergency; and Qatar, the wealthiest of the part, is intrusive and interventionist. Dictatorship keeps on choking the locale and its developing organizations, and Culbertson tails everything easily.

As she walks through the Tahrir Square, she remembers the time of Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring revolution, when the images of Tahrir Square were circulated around the world, illustrating the thousands and millions of people protesting against the repressive government. These people consisted of the youth mainly who were very energetic and were determined to bring a change and gift a new Egypt to their next generations. This protest had lasted for 18 days. As the media always plays a vital role in combining foreign world with their country, during these times, the Egyptian government tightly controlled media coverage of all the events happening, leading to everyone getting fed up of the events happening around.

The new governments should have focused on changing the constitution rather than changing the government but gravely said, three governments were overthrown but the situation and the game remained unchanged. In 2014, Egypt had a new second constitution; it limited the president to two four-year terms. While Islam remained the state religion, but freedom of beliefs was granted. She further settles all the questions arising in the reader's mind about her journey by fairly stating that she had learned a lot from her journey and after interviewing all the famous government officials, revolutionists and media watchdogs, she has this increased feeling of respect for all the men and women who had participated in this movement. The Arab Spring had reformed the set-up of the Ottoman Empire, which was being followed since a century.

The movement of Arab revolution (2010-2013) results are even remarkable, as the old narrow-minded constitutions were not only revised but brought in action and spirit with the aim to bring a positive change in the society. Furthermore, the ethnocentric thinking of the Arabs changed as they included new social contracts with the diverse, multicultural sub-divisions of the civilization of Arab world. Until now, the various religious, folkloric and the national characteristics of Arab states are being redefined. But in all this, they have not forgotten about their own religion. However, now there is more focus on researching about the various aspects of Islam and politely discussing the differences in the opinions rather than fighting barbarically over much small issues. The trends of the whole Arab society are changing over time as merit-based opportunities are being provided rather than the old intercession system.