



# **A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice**

*Malalai Joya , Derrick O'keefe (co. author)*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

# A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice

*Malalai Joya , Derrick O'keefe (co. author)*

## **A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice**

Malalai Joya , Derrick O'keefe (co. author)

Malalai Joya was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2010. An extraordinary young woman raised in the refugee camps of Iran and Pakistan, Joya became a teacher in secret girls' schools, hiding her books under her burqa so the Taliban couldn't find them; she helped establish a free medical clinic and orphanage in her impoverished home province of Farah; and at a constitutional assembly in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2003, she stood up and denounced her country's powerful NATO-backed warlords. She was twenty-five years old. Two years later, she became the youngest person elected to Afghanistan's new Parliament. In 2007, she was suspended from Parliament for her persistent criticism of the warlords and drug barons and their cronies. She has survived four assassination attempts to date, is accompanied at all times by armed guards, and sleeps only in safe houses.

Joya takes us inside this massively important and insufficiently understood country, shows us the desperate day-to-day situations its remarkable people face at every turn, and recounts some of the many acts of rebellion that are helping to change it. A controversial political figure in one of the most dangerous places on earth, Malalai Joya is a hero for our times.

## **A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice Details**

Date : Published October 20th 2009 by Scribner (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9781439109465

Author : Malalai Joya , Derrick O'keefe (co. author)

Format : Hardcover 240 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Biography, Feminism, Politics

 [Download A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an A ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice Malalai Joya , Derrick O'keefe (co. author)**

---

# **From Reader Review A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice for online ebook**

## **Indah says**

This is an awesome book!

Malalai is a very brave young woman. Her voice shook and attracted people, not only in Afghanistan, but also from around the world.

This is a really insightful book of the true condition of Afghanistan. No dramas. No self-pity. It describes life as it is as Joya and millions of Afghans likely to face everyday.

It is very important for everyone to understand the definition of TERRORISM. People used to think that terrorism is caused by extremist who wants nothing but chaos. That is just half the truth. That's why people easily fall into the trap to think that fighting organizations such as Taliban or AL-Qaeda is the only way to fight terrorism.

We often forgot what is the true meaning of TERROR itself. It means extreme fear. Such fear that is caused by intimidation, especially for political reasons. It can also means a person or a thing that causes extreme fear. Therefore, it can be said that, for any reason or purpose, anything that causes such extreme fear, unrest, and chaos, is a TERROR.

This book described how the international politics has helped in creating such terror, instead of helping the people in Afghanistan to get rid of it. It is shameful that business always override human rights even at war!!!

Therefore, concerning political response to US-Afghan war, there are two types of people in this world: the ones that curse US and its allies and the ones that curse organization such as Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

But Joya's book presents us another point of view. What about the people of Afghanistan itself? What is their view on this war?

Remember, EVERYTHING that causes extreme fear and chaos is TERROR.

Joya vividly explains to us, since the coup d'état of the Kingdom, the warlords of Afghanistan has been the root of problem of terror in Afghanistan.

Taliban and Bin Laden are "imported" terror from the Arab world. The US and its allies didn't help at all in fighting them. They only make it worse, by letting the warlords to rule over what is left of Afghanistan after a long time of war.

These warlords are the true blood-and-power-thirst enemies of Afghanistan. And Joya points out that they are also the hypocrites, though extremely righteous as they are. They always put burden on everyone else's backs but themselves'. They receive dollars(US)/ euros(Europe)/ dinars(Arabs)/ rubels(Russia) to live in lavishness and trample on Afghan's people. In their utter racism, they killed thousands of people of different

ethnic group of Afghan and despise the rest. They rape and kill women and young girls, without ever being punished. They are responsible for the blood shed in the civil war. These are the rotten maggots that eat Afghanistan from the inside out.

I could feel the irony and agony when Joya tells us that these villains have amended a regulation, which states that all crimes of war will not be punished. Now there is no limitations for them. They become the untouchable.

They are the ones whom martyrs from Afghanistan, like many other young Afghan activists and Joya herself, fight unceasingly with selflessness and no fear of death.

They have a long road to go on their war against this terror. And I am really inspired by their courage.

This book is indeed recommendable.

---

### **Mia Bazooka says**

Malalai Joya has been called "the bravest woman in Afghanistan." At a constitutional assembly in Kabul in 2003, she stood up and denounced her country's powerful NATO-backed warlords. She was twenty-five years old. Two years later, she became the youngest person elected to Afghanistan's new Parliament. In 2007, she was suspended from Parliament for her persistent criticism of the warlords and drug barons and their cronies. She has survived four assassination attempts to date, is accompanied at all times by armed guards, and sleeps only in safe houses.

Often compared to democratic leaders such as Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi, this extraordinary young woman was raised in the refugee camps of Iran and Pakistan. Inspired in part by her father's activism, Malalai became a teacher in secret girls' schools, holding classes in a series of basements. She hid her books under her burqa so the Taliban couldn't find them. She also helped establish a free medical clinic and orphanage in her impoverished home province of Farah. The endless wars of Afghanistan have created a generation of children without parents. Like so many others who have lost people they care about, Malalai lost one of her orphans when the girl's family members sold her into marriage.

While many have talked about the serious plight of women in Afghanistan, Malalai Joya takes us inside the country and shows us the desperate day-to-day situations these remarkable people face at every turn. She recounts some of the many acts of rebellion that are helping to change the country -- the women who bravely take to the streets in peaceful protest against their oppression; the men who step forward and claim "I am her mahram," so the fundamentalists won't punish a woman for walking alone; and the families that give their basements as classrooms for female students.

A controversial political figure in one of the most dangerous places on earth, Malalai Joya is a hero for our times, a young woman who refused to be silent, a young woman committed to making a difference in the world, no matter the cost.

(less)

Want to Read

---

**Andy Miller says**

This challenged my beliefs and made me think. A lot. Malalai Joya is a young Afghan who showed her courage by teaching young girls when the Taliban made it illegal. Her bravery has continued, many of her friends and allies have been assassinated or imprisoned yet Malalai has continued to speak out .

What is challenging is her argument is that the US and UN have put warlords in control of Afghanistan and those warlords are not much better than the Taliban. She cites many examples who either cooperated with Soviet Union or murdered many Afghans between Soviet and Taliban rule or cooperated with the Taliban. She cites one example of someone who helped some of the planners of 9/11 locate to Afghanistan who is now in a position of power.

Malalai describes her election to the Afghan parliament, the attempts to muzzle her and the subsequent suspension of her from the Parliament. She also describes the huge corruption in Afghanistan today and how most aid goes into the pockets of corrupt leaders.

In the second half of the book her stridency and loss of focus on what could be done to help Afghans started to wear. Some of her proposals seem questionable such as end of American involvement in Afghanistan while at the same time arguing that warlords should be banished from power. I was left wondering who would lead that charge without American support, though I believe she would argue that the Afghans are better off dealing with these issues on their own without any foreign involvement. She also seemed to get somewhat polemic, her endorsement of Hugo Chavez for example was very jarring coming from someone who is arguing for free speech and democracy(though she does criticize Chavez for his embrace of the Iranian government)

But even if I question agreeing to all her arguments I was certainly challenged by her arguments. I am also very disturbed that she was kicked out of Parliament after being elected and for only expressing her opinion. It is also disturbing to read of the war's impact on Afghan civilians.

In the final analysis, this book challenged me and made me think as few books have

---

## **Susan O says**

First off let me say, there have been 2 versions of this book released. I just bought it for my Kindle last week, so I have the latest edition. I did not find the writing as objectionable as some reviewers have. I'm sure as in most books there are areas where it could be improved, but it was not a distraction to me at all.

There are many extraordinary men and women in this world and this book is the story of one of them. Although Malalai Joya is a young woman, she has an important story to tell. Born into war-torn Afghanistan, she was fortunate to have a father who was educated and wanted his children to be educated as well - an estimated 80% of Afghan women are illiterate. Her father also instilled in her a love of democracy.

Malalai Joya is not her real name, but it is the name she goes by in most areas of her life in order to protect her family. Born in 1978, she has never known a time when her country was not at war. In [A Woman Among Warlords](#), Joya describes her life in rural Afghanistan, refugee camps in both Iran and Pakistan, teaching in underground schools for girls, and finally being elected to the new Parliament only to be ejected for speaking out. Her life is constantly in danger, and although she has traveled outside of Afghanistan to speak and carry her message, she won't consider staying out of the country. Love for the real Afghanistan, the people, comes through on every page.

The book gives a brief history of Afghanistan to fill in background for the current struggle. She speaks knowledgeably about the roles other governments have played in this history and credits the research team who helped her gather this information. I have read several other books about Afghanistan and the facts are consistent with what I've read.

Although the book carries a message of hope, it is not a feel good book. She conveys a picture of the horrors that the Afghan people have had to endure and is critical of the people who have brought it about. This

includes both Afghans such as the warlords and the president Hamid Karzai, but also the former Soviet Union and the current US/NATO occupation. However, just as she is able to distinguish between the Afghan government and the people of Afghanistan, she distinguishes between the people of western countries and their governments. Joya is thankful for being able to carry her message to Europe and the US, and for the help she has received from some western organizations.

The message could sound hopeless, but she doesn't see it that way. In the last chapter Joya gives suggestions to people who want to help. As an American, I have often wondered how we could leave Afghanistan with so many problems, many of which we caused, knowing that there are so many warring factions. Joya is insistent that, if democracy is to be attained in Afghanistan, it will be because the people secure it for themselves. The message I get from this book is that yes they would like our help, but from a distance.

---

## **Meg - A Bookish Affair says**

You've gotta hand it to Malalai Joya. In a country rife with gender inequality like Afghanistan, Joya stood up for basic human rights and even got herself elected to the Afghani parliament. I can't imagine what it took to be able to be that voice of reason. I do wish that the book would have discussed a little more about the formation of Joya's views. How did she decide what to believe in? Where did she find that courage? This is a great book about making a difference and speaking out even when the odds are against you!

---

## **James F says**

This is the best of the six books I have now read on women in Afghanistan. Joya is an activist who was elected to the Loya Jirga (the Afghan Parliament) but prevented from speaking and then expelled for criticizing the warlords who still control the country with the support of the US occupation.

I began my reading on Afghanistan with the book of another member of the legislature, Fawzia Koofi, which is the book for the Utah State Library book discussion this month. Although I was impressed by Koofi's descriptions of the crimes of the Jehadi as well as the Taliban, I had many reservations about the way she seemed to be supporting the US position that democracy is going forward in Afghanistan despite obstacles and "corruption", and her positive statements about Northern Alliance leaders like Rabbani and Massoud who were brutal fundamentalists not really any better than the Taliban. I decided to read these other books, all of which have a quite different view.

Joya actually lists Koofi second in a list of pro-government women who are always brought out to foreign visitors and media as proof of "democracy." I have no doubt that it takes courage even to be a woman politician in Afghanistan today, and make even the unspecific and "polite" criticism of corruption that Koofi makes, and that she does risk her life doing it. But Joya is taking far more risks for her outspoken comments on specific warlords who dominate the Kargai regime and most of the countryside.

All five of the books I have read other than Koofi's mention RAWA as one of the central pro-woman and pro-democracy organizations; two were specifically about RAWA and Meena, its martyred leader. Although Joya specifically denies being a RAWA member (this has been an accusation against her, since the organization is hated by the fundamentalists and operates underground) she expresses in many places her support to RAWA's positions, and says she would join RAWA if she joined any organization.

This book says what the Western media does not, explaining how the US and its allies have deliberately supported the warlords and kept them in power, while hypocritically claiming to support democracy and women's liberation. She is specific, giving the past histories and present activities of many of the chief officials in the Kargai regime.

I wish Americans who think they know what our government is doing over there would read this book.

---

### **Beka says**

This should be mandatory reading for anyone who wants to understand Afghanistan. Malalai Joya was the youngest member of Afghanistan's first post-Taliban Parliament, and her story is as shocking as it is inspiring. It's not a gentle book; Joya doesn't pull any punches, no matter what aspect of her country's dire situation she's addressing. This can be hard for an American reader, but when you think about the fact that the woman criticizing the NATO operation so mercilessly on paper has also risked her life to criticize brutal warlords to their faces, then it seems only fair to take your lumps. However, I think the best thing about this memoir is the picture it paints of the Afghan people as lovers of true democracy who are willing to risk their stability, their happiness, and their lives to support the democratic dream. It's a pity they can't get access to NATO as easily as the warlords...and a pity that NATO has chosen to ignore Malalai Joya, who is a honest, if abrasive, voice.

---

### **Tiffani Cairo says**

A touching story of the truth overseas that we are all too often removed. An inspiring woman whoms passion is infectious. Also, keep tissue on hand.

---

### **Natalie says**

A great look into the history of Afghanistan and it's current situation. Malalai Joya is an inspiration to read; a young woman who is so brave and loves her country so much that she could not just sit by while corruption and violence took over. A good read if you're interested in learning about women's rights in Afghanistan

---

### **Louise says**

Malalai Joya has outsized courage. She has experienced trauma and seen brutality and grinding poverty on a scale we who live under stable governments cannot imagine. Just knowing that carrying a book inside your burka can cost you your life is an outrageous thought. She braved this and more to share her education. Later she used her courage on the local and world stages.

It is painful to know that the perpetrators of the destruction of Kabul, those who murdered innocents and those who made and enforced the draconian laws against women came to power in a "democracy". It must be horrible for the average citizens, all who are bereaved in some way.



Joya was very young to be elected to the Loya Jirgha. Was it wise to begin her tenure with such open criticism? Here in the west, it is not a way to begin a new job or be effective in politics. But, none of us is facing colleagues who months earlier ordered or participated in the murder of innocent people and the destruction of cities. How does a sane and compassionate person respond to this?

If only by defining the people in charge Joya shows how corrupt and anti-democratic the leaders are. Karzai's first choice for Chief Justice told NPR that he supports beheading for un-Islamic behavior and Karzai's top drug advisor spent 4 years in a Nevada prison for selling heroin. The governor Karzai appointed to Joya's home district was believed by residents to be a war criminal, and later, believed to have attacked its orphanage and clinic. While there are no courts to prove or disprove their beliefs, couldn't Karzai find a governor with a better reputation? These are only a few examples.

The US, pouring \$ billions into the country, did not want to hear bad news. Good news stories about roads, hospitals and schools continue to emanate from the country. Many, like Barbara Bush, believe (or want to believe, or have a vested interest in the public believing) that all girls and boys can now go to school and that there is a functioning economy and legal system.

It may be that President Obama has gotten the message. In March he made a surprise visit to give stern words to Karzai. In this book Karzai appears to be hapless. He is sympathetic listener but he does nothing. (Some say he is a user of Afghanistan's major export, and while this book does not hint of that, his behavior does.) I presume he listened sympathetically to President Obama, but when he does nothing, what will President Obama do with a country so out of control? Joya says the US should leave immediately, but also says for this to work the warlords must be disarmed... a major Catch 22.

This was a very enlightening book. The specific examples she cites helps to put the pieces (left out by the media) together. The book needs an editor. Some information is repeated. Some topics need more introduction. Some of the material is presented in a way it is hard for western readers to pull context. While the qualities of the book put it in the 3 to 4 star category, I give it the full 5 stars for the specificity of the information and the courageous work of the author.

---

## **Yamid HR says**

I read this book as part of the World Reading Challenge #1, Afghanistan. This is a very inspiring book; The voice of Malalai Joya represents not just people in Afghanistan but all over the world. They called her the bravest woman in Afghanistan because She did and is doing things that bring hope to the hopeless and challenge us to care for widows, orphans, women, the oppressed and others around us.

Her voice will make you cry and also smile, because her voice is real and full of grace even when she lives difficult times everyday

Now I have a better understanding of the situation in Afghanistan, this book is full of historic facts and many comments that will make you to think not just about a new way of seeing Afghanistan, but probably your own life and your country.

Some of the highlights of the book on my blog at <http://www.thewayoflove.com.co/2016/0...>

Great book!

---

## Lexi says

This book is about a young woman in Afghanistan who, despite all odds, taught in secret girls' schools, established a medical clinic and orphanage, and became the youngest person elected to Afghanistan's new Parliament. It was extremely interesting and gave a lot of insight to a country that I really don't know a lot about. It also made me sad that conditions, especially women's rights, are still so bad in many countries.

---

## Chez says

an amazing story. My husband and I are at opposites when it comes to the issue of Afghanistan. I am making him read this book. After reading this book I want to become an activist. All through the book (I read it in about 9 hours and still made dinner) I kept wondering "why won't she let it goooooo." Yes people need to be brought before the war commission for Crimes against Humanity, and yes when this country is solvent enough, these men will face punishment. But then I finally came up with it. She was born in April. Taurus' never forgive, never let an issue die, it's their way or the highway. I should know I'm one of them. Now I understand her. I hope she survives to see justice prevail.

---

## Rita says

This is a very touching memoir of a very courageous young woman.

### **Forget about everything you thought you knew about Afghanistan.**

*No nation can donate liberation to another nation. These values must be fought for and won by the people themselves. ... All of our human rights have been won through struggle, and all of them can be lost through neglect.*

Never before has a memoir moved me as much as Malalai Joya's *Raising my Voice: The extraordinary story of the Afghan woman who dares to speak out* has.

It is not the prose itself that has left a long lasting impression in me, for frankly, it does leave something behind to be desired, but you must remember that an impressive prose is not the purpose of this book. Its purpose is to educate you and to show you what is really going on in Afghanistan, and that what its people really want is to have all the invading forces out of the country and fight for their own democracy and liberty on their own and to have the war criminals in the government brought to justice.

This is truly a touching account of a strong, young, independent and idealistic woman, who is refusing to be silenced by her oppressive government - and rightfully so. Her book has been a real eye opener as to what the day-to-day life, and struggle, of the people of Afghanistan, is like. Poverty, oppression, illiteracy and no freedom of speech is what they are facing every day. It is truly amazing how little we in the West know and are told about what is really going on in that far away and war-torn country.

We have been led to believe, by the US and NATO, our own governments, that the current occupation by our

forces is enforced for the good of the Afghan people in the name of freedom, democracy and women's rights. Nothing could be further from the truth, if you believe in Joya's words - and I do. All her verifiable stories cannot be untrue.

It is frightening to read how the US/NATO has driven the Taliban out of the country and put a puppet-government in its place. The Afghans are now ruled by a group of people that consists of war criminals, fundamentalists, warlords and drug lords. It is a government that US/NATO are still fully supporting. The MP's have no intention of giving up the power that they have been given, nor are they interested in improving the situation for those who really need it: the poor, the illiterate, the children and the women of the country.

If your involvement in bettering the situation in Afghanistan can for whatever reason only extend to reading this book, then you owe it to yourself and to the Afghan people to go out and buy yourself a copy right now and read it. All its earnings are going toward supporting humanitarian projects in the country.

I sincerely hope that Joya, who has already survived numerous assassination attempts, will survive long enough to experience democracy and freedom in her beloved country in her lifetime. She is every day putting her life at risk for while openly fighting for it.

---

### Sara says

????? ?? ????? ?????????? ??? ????? ?? ?????? ??? ?????????? ?????????? ?? ?????????? ? ??? ?? ???  
????????? ?????????????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????????? ?? ?? ?????? ??? ?????? ?????????? ??????????  
???? ?? ?? ??? ?????????????? ? ?????? ?????? ??????????  
???? ?? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????????? ??? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????  
?? ?????????? ??? ?????? ?????????? ???.  
??? ?????????? ??? ?????????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?? ?????????? ?? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ??  
????????????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ??????????

---

### Jane says

I recently heard Joya interviewed on the radio and that is what prompted me to read this book. Figured it was about time that I learned a little bit more about Afghanistan from something other than filtered western news. Really, this is an incredible and inspiring story of one woman's courage and determination to stand up to the criminal and thuggish nature of those in power in Afghanistan. I am awed. She does not paint a pretty picture either of politics in her own country or of the presence/policies of the West. The writing was uneven at times. I thought the most effective and powerful points in the book were when she was telling her own story. In an attempt to help readers understand the many and complicated layers of the history and current situation of Afghanistan Joya goes off on some tangents. In the last 30 pages it felt more like a diatribe. While I understand her need to do this I felt like it took away from her story. All in all I'm very glad to have read this. Joya's passion to speak the truth is amazing and important and urgent.

---

## **Unwisely says**

Wow, okay, this is a woman in Afghanistan who won a seat in parliament. Which is pretty cool. But she's a progressive, a fighter for the common man. In this book she sketches out some of the political history, and shows how many of the elected representatives are the same warlords that have been terrorizing the locals. (She draws a line between legitimate freedom fighters and warlords.)

Her story has moments of breath-taking appalling behavior - refusing to let her speak for the flimsiest of reason - but heart-warming support from the people she represents.

I particularly like her candor. She says things like, I wish I hadn't done [thing I did in the early throes of excitement over independence]; it legitimized the sham system.

Fascinating and inspiring.

---

## **Janet says**

This is a book that definitely deserves to be read as it contains very important information about the reality of life inside Afghanistan written by a very dedicated and brave woman.

She rightly points out that we in the west following mainstream media really have no concept of the reality of what is occurring every day in Afghanistan. It's a wake-up call and forced me to start considering what NATO forces are really trying to achieve there.

The reason I only gave it two stars is not from what Malalai Joya has to relate, but for the way her story and passions are told in this book. It's a very dry read and towards the end I found the style becoming more and more repetitive. You get a feeling of being told "this happened and then that happened" and so on.

---

## **Jukka says**

### **A Woman Among Warlords - Malalai Joya**

SEE Malalai ON DEMOCRACY NOW March 28, 2011:  
<http://www.democracynow.org/2011/3/28...>

This book is very good, and it represents a grass-roots voice of both people of Afghanistan and of free-thinking Islamic women.

There are three main parts or aspects to this book. A memoir of a child growing up in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation, and being a refugee from that regime, and then the time after returning to Afghanistan when the Taliban come to power, secretly teaching school and organizing aid, all as a very young woman. It is also a memoir on the political life of someone who steps forward to represent everyday people during the current U.S. occupation, fighting the corrupt structure that the U.S. has created there. And then it is a political analysis of the way forward, with specific things that will bring Afghanistan forward.

Malalai Joya is an extremely brave person, someone who does what needs to be done, and does not count the

personal cost. This is a voice not heard elsewhere, (at least commonly in the west) and so this is a very important book that must be read and it's wisdoms spread.

It is good to read criticism from the other side. She is critical of Obama's war making, and Bush's as well. Her view on Benazir Bhutto, again from the other side, is one I've not known before.

I had to reflect too, of the role of strong fathers who love their daughters, and recognize the value of education and free thought. I've read a few books like this lately and all involve the common element connecting this sort father in Islamic culture with the life of strong healthy women.

My one minor criticism is that perhaps the modern memoir has not aged enough to give the author perspective. What she did was right, but how you describe, and what detail you give is not always apparent when you are in the middle of the situation. That said I don't think there is time to waste, this is too important and needs to be said and understood now, there is blood on our hands.

---

### **Ruth Jalfon says**

an important book in that it highlights the reality in Afghanistan that is not told in the mainstream media. She gives some of the history too which is new to me and helped me understand the current situation. There is no doubt she is extraordinarily brave to stand up for the rights of women and justice in a country where opening her mouth is immediate suicide, and incredibly tenacious and passionate in her goals to get as far as being an MP - the fact she is still alive shows she has a lot of grassroots support. She is doing amazing work however one thing I do not agree with her is her belief that as soon as foreign powers go, Afghanistan can be on the road to true democracy. She herself mentions briefly in the history telling parts of the book that there have been widespread reforms before earlier in the 20th century which she points out in a positive way as they did so themselves without any help from outside, which is true, but equally true is that the people with their strong Islamic / religious culture (and I'm not talking about fundamentalists) quickly became 'disillusioned' with these more liberal dictators and paved the way for less progressive rulers. So, Afghanistan may eventually become a liberal modern country but its geographical position and religious culture will make this road long. Other reasons I gave this book only 3 stars is that she mentioned a few times as an equivalent situation the 'persecuted Palestinians' from the 'aggressive Israeli occupiers' and the terrible lives and predicament of the poor Palestinian children - this kind of biased ignorant viewpoint is hypocritical (as she has never visited the middle east and is getting her information from presumably the media that she herself lambasts as biased and under the control of warlords and american interests in Afghanistan and so not reliable when considering the Afghan situation), and made me question her other statements. Finally, do not read this book for great writing - that's not the point, it is very repetitive and by its nature full of slogans and black or white self-righteousness.

---