LIBYA

A HISTORICAL AND

CULTURAL OVERVIEW

Helen Chapin Metz, ed. 
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments  
Preface  
Country Studies Index  

## History

**EARLY HISTORY**  
Tripolitania and the Phoenicians  
Cyrenaica and the Greeks  
Fezzan and the Garamentes  
Libya and the Romans  

**ISLAM AND THE ARABS**  
Fatimids  
Hilalians  
Hafsids  
Medieval Cyrenaica and Fezzan  

**OTTOMAN REGENCY**  
Pashas and Deys  
Karamanlis  
The Ottoman Revival  
The Sanusi Order  

**COLONY OF ITALY**  
Italy and Arab Resistance  
The Second Italo-Sanusi War  
The Fourth Shore  

**WORLD WAR II AND INDEPENDENCE**  
The Desert War  
Allied Administration  
The United Nations and Libya  

**INDEPENDENT LIBYA**  
The September 1969 Coup  
Qadhafi  

Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
Politics of Oil  
Libya and Arab Unity  
Libyan Ventures in Sub-Saharan Africa  
Relations with the United States  

## Geography

Climate  

## The Society

**POPULATION**  
Arabs  
Berbers  
Tuareg  
Black Africans  
Languages of Libya  

**STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY**  
Evolutionary Changes in a Traditional Society  
The Revolution and Social Change  

THE FAMILY, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE SEXES
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Preface

Like its predecessor, this study is an attempt to treat in a concise and objective manner the dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects of contemporary Libyan society. Sources of information included scholarly journals and monographs, official reports of governments and international organizations, foreign and domestic newspapers, and numerous periodicals. Relatively up-to-date statistical data in the economic and social fields were unavailable, even from the United Nations and the World Bank. Measurements are given in the metric system.

The transliteration of Arabic words and phrases follows a modified version of the system adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names and the Permanent Committee on Geographic Names for British Official Use, known as the BGN/PCGN system. The modification is a significant one, however, in that diacritical markings and hyphens have been omitted. Moreover, some geographical locations, such as the cities of Benghazi, Tobruk, and Tripoli, are so well known by those conventional names that their formal names--Banghazi, Tubruq, and Tarabulus--are not used.

UNTIL LIBYA ACHIEVED independence in 1951, its history was essentially that of tribes, regions, and cities, and of the empires of which it was a part. Derived from the name by which a single Berber tribe was known to the ancient Egyptians, the name Libya was subsequently applied by the Greeks to most of North Africa and the term Libyan to all of its Berber inhabitants. Although ancient in origin, these names were not used to designate the specific territory of modern Libya and its people until the twentieth century, nor indeed was the whole area formed into a coherent political unit until then. Hence, despite the long and distinct histories of its regions, modern Libya must be viewed as a new country still developing national consciousness and institutions.

Geography was the principal determinant in the separate historical development of Libya's three traditional regions--Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. Cut off from each other by formidable deserts, each retained its separate identity into the 1960s. At the heart of Tripolitania was its metropolis, Tripoli, for centuries a terminal for caravans plying the Saharan trade routes and a port sheltering pirates and slave traders. Tripolitania's cultural ties were with the Maghrib, of which it was a part geographically and culturally and with which it shared a common history. Tripolitans developed their political consciousness in reaction to foreign domination, and it was from Tripolitania that the strongest impulses came for the unification of modern Libya.

In contrast to Tripolitania, Cyrenaica historically was oriented toward Egypt and the Mashriq. With the exception of some of its coastal towns,
Cyrenaica was left relatively untouched by the political influence of the regimes that claimed it but were unable to assert their authority in the hinterland. An element of internal unity was brought to the region's tribal society in the nineteenth century by a Muslim religious order, the Sanusi, and many Cyrenacians demonstrated a determination to retain their regional autonomy even after Libyan independence and unification.

Fezzan was less involved with either the Maghrib or the Mashriq. Its nomads traditionally looked for leadership to tribal dynasties that controlled the oases astride the desert trade routes. Throughout its history, Fezzan maintained close relations with sub-Saharan Africa as well as with the coast.

The most significant milestones in Libya's history were the introduction of Islam and the Arabization of the country in the Middle Ages, and, within the last two generations, national independence, the discovery of petroleum, and the September 1969 revolution that brought Muammar al Qadhafi to power. The era since 1969 has brought many important changes. The Qadhafi regime has made the first real attempt to unify Libya's diverse peoples and to create a distinct Libyan state and identity. It has created new political structures and made a determined effort at diversified economic development financed by oil revenues. The regime has also aspired to leadership in Arab and world affairs. As a consequence of these developments, Libyan society has been subjected to a significant degree of government direction and supervision, much of it at the behest of Qadhafi himself. Although the merits of the regime and its policies were much debated by Libyans and foreigners alike, there was no question that Libya in the 1980s was a significantly different country from the one it had been only two or three decades earlier.

Archaeological evidence indicates that from at least the eighth millennium B.C. Libya's coastal plain shared in a Neolithic culture, skilled in the domestication of cattle and cultivation of crops, that was common to the whole Mediterranean littoral. To the south, in what is now the Sahara Desert, nomadic hunters and herders roamed a vast, well-watered savanna that abounded in game and provided pastures for their stock. Their culture flourished until the region began to desiccate after 2000 B.C. Scattering before the encroaching desert and invading horsemen, the savanna people migrated into the Sudan or were absorbed by the Berbers.

The origin of the Berbers is a mystery, the investigation of which has produced an abundance of educated speculation but no solution. Archaeological and linguistic evidence strongly suggests southwestern Asia as the point from which the ancestors of the Berbers may have begun their migration into North Africa early in the third millennium B.C. Over the succeeding centuries they extended their range from
Egypt to the Niger Basin. Caucasians of predominantly Mediterranean stock, the Berbers present a broad range of physical types and speak a variety of mutually unintelligible dialects that belong to the Afro-Asiatic language family. They never developed a sense of nationhood and have historically identified themselves in terms of their tribe, clan, and family. Collectively, Berbers refer to themselves simply as *imazighan*, to which has been attributed the meaning "free men."

Inscriptions found in Egypt dating from the Old Kingdom (ca. 2700-2200 B.C.) are the earliest known recorded testimony of the Berber migration and also the earliest written documentation of Libyan history. At least as early as this period, troublesome Berber tribes, one of which was identified in Egyptian records as the Levu (or "Libyans"), were raiding eastward as far as the Nile Delta and attempting to settle there. During the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2200-1700 B.C.) the Egyptian pharaohs succeeded in imposing their overlordship on these eastern Berbers and extracted tribute from them. Many Berbers served in the army of the pharaohs, and some rose to positions of importance in the Egyptian state. One such Berber officer seized control of Egypt in about 950 B.C. and, as Shishonk I, ruled as pharaoh. His successors of the twentysecond and twenty-third dynasties--the so-called Libyan dynasties (ca. 945-730 B.C.)--are also believed to have been Berbers.

Throughout the period of Punic and Greek colonization of the coastal plain, the area known as Fezzan was dominated by the Garamentes, a tribal people who entered the region sometime before 1000 B.C. In the desert they established a powerful kingdom astride the trade route between the western Sudan and the Mediterranean coast. The Garamentes left numerous inscriptions in *tifinagh*, the ancient Berber form of writing still used by the Tuareg. Beyond these and the observations of Herodotus and other classical writers on their customs and dealings with the coastal settlements, little was known of this extraordinary and mysterious people until the advent of modern archaeological methods.

The Garamentes' political power was limited to a chain of oases about 400 kilometers long in the Wadi Ajal, but from their capital at Germa they controlled the desert caravan trade from Ghadamis south to the Niger River, eastward to Egypt, and west to Mauretania. The Carthaginians employed them as carriers of goods--gold and ivory purchased in exchange for salt--from the western Sudan to their depots on the Mediterranean coast. The Garamentes were also noted as horsebreeders and herders of longhorned cattle. They succeeded in irrigating portions of their arid lands for cultivation by using *foggares*, vast underground networks of stone-lined water channels. Their wealth and technical skill are also attested to by the remains of their towns, which were built of stone, and more than 50,000 of their pyramidal tombs. Rome sent several punitive expeditions against the Garamentes.
before concluding a lasting commercial and military alliance with them late in the first century A.D.

For more than 400 years, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were prosperous Roman provinces and part of a cosmopolitan state whose citizens shared a common language, legal system, and Roman identity. Roman ruins like those of Leptis Magna, extant in present-day Libya, attest to the vitality of the region, where populous cities and even smaller towns enjoyed the amenities of urban life--the forum, markets, public entertainments, and baths--found in every corner of the Roman Empire. Merchants and artisans from many parts of the Roman world established themselves in North Africa, but the character of the cities of Tripolitania remained decidedly Punic and, in Cyrenaica, Greek. Tripolitania was a major exporter of olive oil, as well as being the entrepôt for the gold and slaves conveyed to the coast by the Garamentes, while Cyrenaica remained an important source of wines, drugs, and horses. The bulk of the population in the countryside consisted of Berber farmers, who in the west were thoroughly "Punicized" in language and customs.

Although the African provinces profited as much as any part of the empire from the imposition of the Pax Romana, the region was not without strife and threat of war. Only near the end of the first century A.D. did the army complete the pacification of the Sirtica, a desert refuge for the barbarian tribes that had impeded overland communications between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. But for more than two centuries thereafter commerce flowed safely between markets and ports along a well-maintained road system and sea lanes policed by Roman forces who also guaranteed the security of settled areas against incursions by desert nomads. The vast territory was defended by one locally recruited legion (5,500 men) in Cyrenaica and the elements of another in Tripolitania, reinforced by tribal auxiliaries on the frontier. Although expeditions penetrated deep into Fezzan, in general Rome sought to control only those areas in the African provinces that were economically useful or could be garrisoned with the manpower available.

Under the Ptolemies, Cyrenaica had become the home of a large Jewish community, whose numbers were substantially increased by tens of thousands of Jews deported there after the failure of the rebellion against Roman rule in Palestine and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some of the refugees made their way into the desert, where they became nomads and nurtured their fierce hatred of Rome. They converted to Judaism many of the Berbers with whom they mingled, and in some cases whole tribes were identified as Jewish. In 115 the Jews raised a major revolt in Cyrenaica that quickly spread through Egypt back to Palestine. The uprising was put down by 118, but only after Jewish insurgents had laid waste to Cyrenaica and sacked the city of Cyrene. Contemporary observers counted the loss of life during those years at
more than 200,000, and at least a century was required to restore Cyrenaica to the order and prosperity that had meanwhile prevailed in Tripolitania.

As part of his reorganization of the empire in 300, the Emperor Diocletian separated the administration of Crete from Cyrenaica and in the latter formed the new provinces of Upper Libya and Lower Libya, using the term Libya for the first time as an administrative designation. With the definitive partition of the empire in 395, the Libyans were assigned to the eastern empire; Tripolitania was attached to the western empire.

By the beginning of the second century, Christianity had been introduced among the Jewish community, and it soon gained converts in the towns and among slaves. Rome's African provinces were thoroughly Christianized by the end of the fourth century, and inroads had been made as well among the Berber tribes in the hinterland. From an early date, however, the churches in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica developed distinct characteristics that reflected their differing cultural orientations. The former came under the jurisdiction of the Latin patriarch, the bishop of Rome, and the latter under that of the Coptic (Egyptian) patriarch of Alexandria. In both areas, religious dissent became a vehicle for social revolt at a time of political deterioration and economic depression.

Invited to North Africa by a rebellious Roman official, the Vandals, a Germanic tribe, crossed from Spain in 429. They seized power and, under their leader, Gaiseric, established a kingdom that made its capital at Carthage. Although the Roman Empire eventually recognized their overlordship in much of North Africa, including Tripolitania, the Vandals confined their rule to the most economically profitable areas. There they constituted an isolated warrior caste, concerned with collecting taxes and exploiting the land but leaving civil administration in Roman hands. From their African base they conquered Sardinia and Corsica and launched raids on Italy, sacking the city of Rome in 455. In time, however, the Vandals lost much of their warlike spirit, and their kingdom fell to the armies of Belisarius, the Byzantine general who in 533 began the reconquest of North Africa for the Roman Empire.

Effective Byzantine control in Tripolitania was restricted to the coast, and even there the newly walled towns, strongholds, fortified farms, and watchtowers called attention to its tenuous nature. The region's prosperity had shrunk under Vandal domination, and the old Roman political and social order, disrupted by the Vandals, could not be restored. In outlying areas neglected by the Vandals, the inhabitants had sought the protection of tribal chieftains and, having grown accustomed to their autonomy, resisted reassimilation into the imperial system. Cyrenaica, which had remained an outpost of the Byzantine Empire during the Vandal period, also took on the characteristics of an armed camp. Unpopular Byzantine governors imposed burdensome taxation to meet military costs, but towns and public services—including the water system—were left to decay. Byzantine rule in Africa did prolong the Roman ideal of imperial unity there for another century and a half,
however, and prevented the ascendancy of the Berber nomads in the coastal region.

By the time of his death in A.D. 632, the Prophet Muhammad and his followers had brought most of the tribes and towns of the Arabian Peninsula under the banner of the new monotheistic religion of Islam (literally, "submission"), which was conceived of as uniting the individual believer and society under the omnipotent will of Allah (God). Islamic rulers therefore exercised both temporal and religious authority. Adherents of Islam, called Muslims ("those who submit" to the will of God), collectively formed the House of Islam (Dar al Islam).

Within a generation, Arab armies had carried Islam north and east from Arabia and westward into North Africa. In 642 Amr ibn al As, an Arab general under Caliph Umar I, conquered Cyrenaica, establishing his headquarters at Barce. Two years later, he moved into Tripolitania, where, by the end of the decade, the isolated Byzantine garrisons on the coast were overrun and Arab control of the region consolidated. Uqba bin Nafi, an Arab general under the ruling Caliph, invaded Fezzan in 663, forcing the capitulation of Germa. Stiff Berber resistance in Tripolitania had slowed the Arab advance to the west, however, and efforts at permanent conquest were resumed only when it became apparent that the Maghrib could be opened up as a theater of operations in the Muslim campaign against the Byzantine Empire. In 670 the Arabs surged into the Roman province of Africa (transliterated Ifriqiya in Arabic; present-day Tunisia), where Uqba founded the city of Kairouan (present-day Al Qayrawan) as a military base for an assault on Byzantine-held Carthage. Twice the Berber tribes compelled them to retreat into Tripolitania, but each time the Arabs, employing recently converted Berber tribesmen recruited in Tripolitania, returned in greater force, and in 693 they took Carthage. The Arabs cautiously probed the western Maghrib and in 710 invaded Morocco, carrying their conquests to the Atlantic. In 712 they mounted an invasion of Spain and in three years had subdued all but the mountainous regions in the extreme north. Muslim Spain (called Andalusia), the Maghrib (including Tripolitania), and Cyrenaica were systematically organized under the political and religious leadership of the Umayyad caliph of Damascus.

Arab rule in North Africa--as elsewhere in the Islamic world in the eighth century--had as its ideal the establishment of political and religious unity under a caliphate (the office of the Prophet's successor as supreme earthly leader of Islam) governed in accord with sharia (a legal system) administered by qadis (religious judges) to which all other considerations, including tribal loyalties, were subordinated. The sharia was based primarily on the Quran and the hadith and derived in part from Arab tribal and market law.

Arab rule was easily imposed in the coastal farming areas and on the
towns, which prospered again under Arab patronage. Townsmen valued the security that permitted them to practice their commerce and trade in peace, while the Punicized farmers recognized their affinity with the Semitic Arabs to whom they looked to protect their lands; in Cyrenaica, Monophysite adherents of the Coptic Church had welcomed the Muslim Arabs as liberators from Byzantine oppression. Communal and representative Berber tribal institutions, however, contrasted sharply and frequently clashed with the personal and authoritarian government that the Arabs had adopted under Byzantine influence. While the Arabs abhorred the tribal Berbers as barbarians, the Berbers in the hinterland often saw the Arabs only as an arrogant and brutal soldiery bent on collecting taxes.

The Arabs formed an urban elite in North Africa, where they had come as conquerors and missionaries, not as colonists. Their armies had traveled without women and married among the indigenous population, transmitting Arab culture and Islamic religion over a period of time to the townspeople and farmers. Although the nomadic tribes of the hinterland had stoutly resisted Arab political domination, they rapidly accepted Islam. Once established as Muslims, however, the Berbers, with their characteristic love of independence and impassioned religious temperament, shaped Islam in their own image, enthusiastically embracing schismatic Muslim sects—often traditional folk religion barely distinguished as Islam—as a way of breaking from Arab control.

One such sect, the Kharijites (seceders; literally, "those who emerge from impropriety") surfaced in North Africa in the mideighth century, proclaiming its belief that any suitable Muslim candidate could be elected caliph without regard to his race, station, or descent from the Prophet. The attack on the Arab monopoly of the religious leadership of Islam was explicit in Kharijite doctrine, and Berbers across the Maghrib rose in revolt in the name of religion against Arab domination. The rise of the Kharijites coincided with a period of turmoil in the Arab world during which the Abbasid dynasty overthrew the Umayyads and relocated the caliphate in Baghdad. In the wake of the revolt, Kharijite sectarians established a number of theocratic tribal kingdoms, most of which had short and troubled histories. One such kingdom, however, founded by the Bani Khattab, succeeded in putting down roots in remote Fezzan, where the capital, Zawilah, developed into an important oasis trading center.

After the Arab conquest, North Africa was governed by a succession of amirs (commanders) who were subordinate to the caliph in Damascus and, after 750, in Baghdad. In 800 the Abbasid caliph Harun ar Rashid appointed as amir Ibrahim ibn Aghlab, who established a hereditary dynasty at Kairouan that ruled Ifriqiya and Tripolitania as an autonomous state that was subject to the caliph's spiritual jurisdiction and that nominally recognized him as its political suzerain. The Aghlabid amirs repaired the neglected Roman irrigation system, rebuilding the region's prosperity and restoring the vitality of its cities and towns with the agricultural surplus that was produced. At the top of the political and social hierarchy were the bureaucracy, the military
caste, and an Arab urban elite that included merchants, scholars, and government officials who had come to Kairouan, Tunis, and Tripoli from many parts of the Islamic world. Members of the large Jewish communities that also resided in those cities held office under the amirs and engaged in commerce and the crafts. Converts to Islam often retained the positions of authority held traditionally by their families or class in Roman Africa, but a dwindling, Latin-speaking, Christian community lingered on in the towns until the eleventh century. The Aghlabids contested control of the central Mediterranean with the Byzantine Empire and, after conquering Sicily, played an active role in the internal politics of Italy.

By the seventh century, a conflict had developed between supporters of rival claimants to the caliphate that would split Islam into two branches—the orthodox Sunni and the Shia—which continued thereafter as the basic division among Muslims. The Shia (from Shiat Ali, or Party of Ali) supported the claims of the direct descendants of Ali, the fourth caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, whereas the Sunni favored that of Ali's rival, the leader of a collateral branch of Muhammad's tribe, and the principle of election of the fittest from the ranks of the shurfa. The Shia had their greatest appeal among non-Arab Muslims, who, like the Berbers, were scorned by the aristocratic desert Arabs.

In the last decade of the ninth century, missionaries of the Ismaili sect of Shia Islam converted the Kutama Berbers of the Kabylie region to the militant brand of Shia Islam and led them on a crusade against the Sunni Aghlabids. Kairouan fell in 909, and the next year the Kutama installed the Ismaili grandmaster from Syria, Ubaidalla Said, as imam of their movement and ruler over the territory they had conquered, which included Tripolitania. Recognized by his Berber followers as the Mahdi ("the divinely guided one"), the imam founded the Shia dynasty of the Fatimids, named for Fatima, daughter of Muhammad and wife of Ali, from whom the imam claimed descent.

Merchants of the coastal towns were the backbone of the Fatimid state that was founded by religious enthusiasts and imposed by Berber tribesmen. The slow but steady economic revival of Europe created a demand for goods from the East for which Fatimid ports in North Africa and Sicily were ideal distribution centers. Tripoli thrived on the trade in slaves and gold brought from the Sudan and on the sale of wool, leather, and salt shipped from its docks to Italy in exchange for wood and iron goods.

For many years the Fatimids threatened Morocco with invasion, but they eventually turned their armies eastward, where in the name of religion the Berbers took their revenge on the Arabs. By 969 the Fatimids had completed the conquest of Egypt and moved their capital to the new city that they founded at Cairo, where they established a Shia caliphate to
rival that of the Sunni caliph at Baghdad. They left the Maghrib to their Berber vassals, the Zirids, but the Shia regime had already begun to crumble in Tripolitania as factions struggled indecisively for regional supremacy. The Zirids neglected the economy, except to pillage it for their personal gain. Agricultural production declined, and farmers and herdsmen became brigands. Shifting patterns of trade gradually depressed the once-thriving commerce of the towns. In an effort to hold the support of the urban Arabs, in 1049 the Zirid amir defiantly rejected the Shia creed, broke with the Fatimids, and initiated a Berber return to Sunni orthodoxy.

In Cairo the Fatimid caliph reacted by inviting the Bani Hilal and Bani Salim, beduin tribes from Arabia known collectively as the Hilalians, to migrate to the Maghrib and punish his rebellious vassals, the Zirids. The Arab nomads spread across the region, in the words of the historian Ibn Khaldun, like a "swarm of locusts," impoverishing it, destroying towns, and dramatically altering the face and culture of the countryside.

The Hilalian impact on Cyrenaica and Tripolitania was devastating in both economic and demographic terms. Tripoli was sacked, and what little remained of urban life in once-great cities like Cyrene was snuffed out, leaving only ruins. Over a long period of time, Arabs displaced Berbers (many of whom joined the Hilalians) from their traditional lands and converted farmland to pasturage. Land was neglected, and the steppe was allowed to intrude into the coastal plain.

The number of Hilalians who moved westward out of Egypt has been estimated as high as 200,000 families. The Bani Salim seem to have stopped in Libya, while the Bani Hilal continued across the Maghrib until they reached the Atlantic coast of Morocco and completed the Arabization of the region, imposing their social organization, values, and language on it. The process was particularly thorough in Cyrenaica, which is said to be more Arab than any place in the Arab world except for the interior of Arabia.

The Norman rulers of southern Italy took advantage of the Zirids' distress in North Africa to invade Sicily in 1060 and bring it back under Christian control. By 1150 the Normans held a string of ports and fortresses along the coast between Tunis and Tripoli, but their interests in North Africa were commercial rather than political, and no effort was made to extend the conquest inland.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed the rise in Morocco of two rival Berber tribal dynasties--the Almoravids and the Almohads, both founded by religious reformers--that dominated the Maghrib and
Muslim Spain for more than two hundred years. The founder of the Almohad (literally, "one who proclaims" the oneness of God) movement was a member of the Sunni ulama, Ibn Tumart (d. 1130), who preached a doctrine of moral regeneration through reaffirmation of monotheism. As judge and political leader as well as spiritual director, Ibn Tumart gave the Almohads a hierarchical and theocratic centralized government, respecting but transcending the old tribal structure. His successor, the sultan Abdal Mumin (reigned 1130-63), subdued Morocco, extended the Muslim frontier in Spain, and by 1160 had swept eastward across the Maghrib and forced the withdrawal of the Normans from their strongholds in Ifriqiya and Tripolitania, which were added to the Almohad empire.

Mumin proclaimed an Almohad caliphate at Cordova, giving the sultan supreme religious as well as political authority within his domains, but theology gradually gave way to dynastic politics as the motivating force behind the movement. The Almohads had succeeded in unifying the Maghrib but, as its empire grew and the Almohad power base shifted to Spain, the dynasty became more remote from the Berber tribes that had launched it. By 1270 the Almohads in Morocco had succumbed to tribal warfare and in Spain to the steady advance of the Kingdom of Castile.

At the eastern end of the Almohad empire, the sultan left an autonomous viceroy whose office became hereditary in the line of Muhammad bin Abu Hafs (reigned 1207-21), a descendant of one of Ibn Tumart's companions. With the demise of the Almohad dynasty in Morocco, the Hafsids adopted the titles of caliph and sultan and considered themselves the Almohads' legitimate successors, keeping alive the memory of Ibn Tumart and the ideal of Maghribi unity from their capital in Tunis.

The Hafsids' political support and their realm's economy were rooted in coastal towns like Tripoli, while the hinterland was given up to the tribes that had made their nominal submission to the sultan. The Hafsids encouraged trade with Europe and forged close links with Aragon and the Italian maritime states. Despite these commercial ties, Hafsid relations with the European powers eventually deteriorated when the latter intrigued in the dynasty's increasingly troubled and complex internal politics. Theocratic republics, tribal states, and coastal enclaves seized by pirate captains defied the sultan's authority, and in 1460 Tripoli was declared an independent city-state by its merchant oligarchy.

During the Hafsid era, spanning more than 300 years, however, the Maghrib and Muslim Spain had shared a common higher culture--called Moorish--that transcended the rise and fall of dynasties in creating new and unique forms of art, literature, and architecture. Its influence spread from Spain as far as Tripolitania, where Hafsid patronage had encouraged a flowering Arab creativity and scholarship.
Cyrenaica lay outside the orbit of the Maghribi dynasties, its orientation on Egypt. From the time when Saladin displaced the Fatimids in 1171 until the Ottoman occupation in 1517, Egypt was ruled by a succession of Mamluk (caste of "slave-soldiers," in Egypt often Kurds, Circassians, or Turks) dynasties that claimed suzerainty over Cyrenaica but exercised little more than nominal political control there. The beduin tribes of Baraqah, as Cyrenaica was known to the Arabs, willingly accepted no authority other than that of their own chieftains. In the fifteenth century, merchants from Tripoli revived the markets in some towns, but Cyrenaica's main source of income was from the pilgrims and caravans traveling between the Maghrib and Egypt, who purchased protection from the beduins.

Turbulent chieftains of the Bani Khattab dominated Fezzan. Their importance, like that of the Garamentes, derived from their control of the oases on the trade route over which caravans carried gold, ivory, and slaves from the western Sudan to markets on the Mediterranean. In the thirteenth century the king of Bornu, a Muslim state in the Lake Chad Basin, invaded Fezzan from the south and established a client regime that for a time commanded the trade route. Fezzan was always a target for adventurers, one of whom, the Moroccan Muhammad al Fazi, displaced the last of the Bani Khattab early in the sixteenth century and founded a line at Marzuq that remained as undisputed rulers of the region under Ottoman suzerainty.

The Ottoman Maghrib was formally divided into three regencies-- at Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. After 1565 authority as regent in Tripoli was vested in a pasha appointed by the sultan. The regency was provided a corps of janissaries, recruited from Turkish peasants who were committed to a lifetime of military service. The corps was organized into companies, each commanded by a junior officer with the rank of dey (literally, "maternal uncle"). It formed a self-governing military guild, subject to its own laws, whose interests were protected by the Divan, a council of senior officers that also advised the pasha. In time the pasha's role was reduced to that of ceremonial head of state and figurehead representative of Ottoman suzerainty, as real power came to rest with the army.

Mutinies and coups were frequent, and generally the janissaries were loyal to whoever paid and fed them most regularly. In 1611 the deys staged a successful coup, forcing the pasha to appoint their leader, Suleiman Safar, as head of government-- in which capacity he and his successors continued to bear the title dey. At various times the dey was also pasha-regent. His succession to office occurred generally amid intrigue and violence. The regency that he governed was autonomous in internal affairs and, although dependent on the sultan for fresh recruits to the corps of janissaries, his government was left to pursue a virtually
independent foreign policy as well.

Tripoli, which had 30,000 inhabitants at the end of the seventeenth century, was the only city of any size in the regency. The bulk of its residents were Moors, as city-dwelling Arabs were known. Several hundred Turks and renegades formed a governing elite apart from the rest of the population. A larger component was the khouloughlis (literally, "sons of servants"), offspring of Turkish soldiers and Arab women who traditionally held high administrative posts and provided officers for the spahis, the provincial cavalry units that augmented the corps of janissaries. They identified themselves with local interests and were, in contrast to the Turks, respected by the Arabs. Regarded as a distinct caste, the khouloughlis lived in their menshia, a lush oasis located just outside the walls of the city. Jews and moriscos, descendants of Muslims expelled from Spain in the sixteenth century, were active as merchants and craftsmen, some of the moriscos also achieving notoriety as pirates. A small community of European traders clustered around the compounds of the foreign consuls, whose principal task was to sue for the release of captives brought to Tripoli by the corsairs. European slaves and larger numbers of enslaved blacks transported from the Sudan were a ubiquitous feature of the life of the city.

Lacking direction from the Porte (Ottoman government), Tripoli lapsed into a period of military anarchy during which coup followed coup and few deys survived in office more than a year. In 1711 Ahmad Karamanli, a popular khouloughli cavalry officer, seized Tripoli and then purchased his confirmation by the sultan as pasha-regent with property confiscated from Turkish officials he had massacred during the coup. Although he continued to recognize nominal Ottoman suzerainty, Ahmad (reigned 1711-45) created an independent hereditary monarchy in Tripoli with a government that was essentially Arab in its composition. Intelligent and resourceful as well as ruthless, he increased his revenues from piracy, pursued an active foreign policy with European powers, used a loyal military establishment to win the allegiance of the tribes, and extended his authority into Cyrenaica.

The Karamanli regime, however, declined under Ahmad's successors. Then in 1793, a Turkish officer, Ali Benghul, overthrew the Karamanlis and restored Tripoli to Ottoman rule. With the aid of the bey of Tunis, Yusuf ibn Ali Karamanli (reigned 1795-1832) returned to Tripoli and installed himself as pasha. A throwback to the founder of the dynasty, he tamed the tribes and defied both the Porte and British naval power to assist Napoleon Bonaparte during his Egyptian campaign in 1799.

The effectiveness of Tripoli's corsairs had long since deteriorated, but their reputation alone was enough to prompt European maritime states to pay the tribute extorted by the pasha to ensure safe passage of their shipping through Tripolitanian waters. American merchant ships, no
longer covered by British protection, were seized by Barbary pirates in the years after United States independence, and American crews were enslaved. In 1799 the United States agreed to pay Yusuf US$18,000 a year in return for a promise that Tripoli-based corsairs would not molest American ships. Similar agreements were made at the time with the rulers of Morocco, Algiers, and Tunis.

In the years immediately after the Napoleonic wars, which ended in 1815, the European powers forced an end to piracy and the payment of tribute in the Barbary states. Deprived of the basis of its economy, Tripoli was unable to pay for basic imports or to service its foreign debt. When France and Britain pressed for payment of debts on behalf of Tripoli's creditors, the Divan authorized extraordinary taxes to provide the needed revenue. The imposition of the taxes provoked an outcry in the towns and among the tribes that quickly degenerated into civil war. With the allegiance of the country split among rival claimants to the throne, Yusuf abdicated in favor of his son, Ali II (reigned 1832-35). In response to Ali's appeal for assistance and out of fear of the European takeover in Tripoli, the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad II sent Turkish troops, ostensibly to put down the numerous rebellions against the pasha and to restore order. But Ali was packed aboard a Turkish warship, which carried him into exile, while the sultan's troops reinstated Ottoman rule in Tripoli.

The administrative system imposed by the Turks was typical of that found elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. Tripolitania, as all three historic regions were collectively designated, became a Turkish vilayet (province) under a wali (governor general) appointed by the sultan. The province was composed of four sanjaks (subprovinces), each administered by a mutasarrif (lieutenant governor) responsible to the governor general. These subprovinces were each divided into about fifteen districts.

Executive officers from the governor general downward were Turks. The mutasarrif was in some cases assisted by an advisory council and, at the lower levels, Turkish officials relied on aid and counsel from the tribal shaykhs. Administrative districts below the subprovincial level corresponded to the tribal areas that remained the focus of the Arabs' identification.

Although the system was logical and appeared efficient on paper, it was never consistently applied throughout the country. The Turks encountered strong local opposition through the 1850s and showed little interest in implementing Ottoman control over Fezzan and the interior of Cyrenaica. In 1879 Cyrenaica was separated from Tripolitania, its mutasarrif reporting thereafter directly to Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). After the 1908 reform of the Ottoman government, both were
entitled to send representatives to the Turkish parliament.

In an effort to provide the country with a tax base, the Turks attempted unsuccessfully to stimulate agriculture. However, in general, nineteenth-century Ottoman rule was characterized by corruption, revolt, and repression. The region was a backwater province in a decaying empire that had been dubbed the "sick man of Europe."

Outside the towns, the ulama might often be replaced as the spiritual guides of the people by wandering holy men known as marabouts, mystics and seers whose tradition antedated Islam. Called "men of the soil," the marabouts of popular Islam were incorporated into intensely local cults of saints. They had traditionally acted as arbiters in tribal disputes and, whenever the authority of government waned in a particular locale, the people turned to the marabouts for political leadership as well as for spiritual guidance. Islam had thus taken shape as a coexisting blend of the scrupulous intellectualism of the ulama and the sometimes frenzied emotionalism of the masses.

The founder of the Sanusi religious order, Muhammad bin Ali as Sanusi (1787-1859), possessed both the popular appeal of a marabout and the prestige of a religious scholar. Early in his spiritual formation, he had come under the influence of the Sufi, a school of mystics who had inspired an Islamic revival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and incorporated their asceticism into his own religious practices. Born near Oran in Algeria, he had traveled widely, studying and teaching at some of the outstanding Islamic centers of learning of his day, and his reputation as a scholar and holy man had spread throughout North Africa. In 1830 he was honored as the Grand Sanusi (as Sanusi al Kabir) by the tribes and towns of Tripolitania and Fezzan while passing through on his way to Mecca.

Disturbed by division and dissension within Islam, he believed that only a return to the purity of early Islam and its insistence on austerity in faith and morals could restore the religion to its rightful glory. On the basis of his perception of the state and needs of Islam, the Grand Sanusi organized a religious order, founding its first lodge (zawiya; pl., zawaayaa) near Mecca in 1837. Disagreement with the Turkish authorities, however, forced his return to North Africa. He had originally intended to return to Algeria, but the expansion of the French occupation there determined that he settle in Cyrenaica, where the loose hold exercised by Turkish authorities permitted an atmosphere more congenial to his teaching. The tribesmen of the interior were particularly receptive to his ideas, and in 1843 he founded the first Cyrenaican lodge at Al Bayda.

The Grand Sanusi did not tolerate fanaticism. He forbade the use of stimulants as well as the practice of voluntary poverty. Lodge members
were to eat and dress within the limits of religious law and, instead of depending on alms, were required to earn their living through work. No aids to contemplation, such as the processions, gyrations, and mutilations employed by Sufi dervishes, were permitted. The Grand Sanusi accepted neither the wholly intuitive ways described by the Sufis mystics nor the rationality of the orthodox ulama; rather, he attempted to adapt from both. The beduins had shown no interest in the ecstatic practices of the Sufi that were gaining adherents in the towns, but they were attracted in great numbers to the Sanusis. The relative austerity of the Sanusi message was especially suited to the character of the Cyrenaican beduins, whose way of life had not changed markedly in the centuries since the Arabs had first accepted the Prophet's teachings.

The leaders of the Sanusi movement encouraged the beduins to render to the Grand Sanusi a reverence that verged on veneration of him as a saint, an act forbidden in orthodox Islam. In fact, the tribesmen regarded him as a marabout and, indeed, this was the indispensable basis of their attachment to him. In no other way could an outsider like Muhammad bin Ali have won their allegiance. The Sanusi order ultimately permitted its leaders to transform their baraka as holy men into a potent political force capable of holding together a national movement.

To the single lodge founded at Al Bayda in 1843 was eventually added a network of lodges throughout Cyrenaica that bound together the tribal system of the region. The lodge filled an important place in the lives of the tribesmen. Besides its obvious function as a religious center and conduit of baraka to the tribe, it was also a school, caravansary, social and commercial center, court of law, and haven for the poor. It provided a place of high culture and safety in the desert wilderness.

Before his death in 1859, the Grand Sanusi established the order's center at Al Jaghbub, which lay at the intersection of the pilgrimage route to Mecca and the main trade route between the Sudan and the coast. There he founded a respected Islamic school, as well as a training center for lodge shaykhs. He hoped by this move to facilitate expanded Sanusi missionary activities in the Sahel and in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Grand Sanusi's son, Muhammad, succeeded him as the order's leader. Because of his forceful personality and his outstanding organizational talents, Muhammad brought the order to the peak of its influence and was recognized as the Mahdi. In 1895 the Mahdi moved the order's headquarters 650 kilometers south from Al Jaghbub to the oasis of Al Kufrah. There he could better supervise missionary activities that were threatened by the advance of French colonialism in the Sudan, which he viewed in religious terms as Christian intervention into Muslim territory. Although the order had never used force in its missionary activities, the Mahdi proclaimed a holy war (jihad) to resist French inroads and brought the Sanusis into confrontation for the first time with a European power. When the Mahdi died in 1902, he left 146 lodges in Africa and Arabia and had brought virtually all the beduins of Cyrenaica under the order's influence. Under the aegis of the order, the tribes of Cyrenaica owed loyalty to a single leader, despite their
otherwise extremely divisive rivalries and feuds. Thus a loose umbrella organization forged these otherwise disparate elements into a common unit bound by sentiment and loyalty.

Upon the Mahdi's death he was succeeded by Ahmad ash Sharif, who governed the order as regent for his young cousin, Muhammad Idris as Sanusi (later King Idris of Libya). Ahmad's campaign against French forces was a failure and brought on the destruction of many Sanusi missions in West Africa.

Italy, which became a unified state only in 1860, was a late starter in the race for colonies. For the Italians, the marginal Turkish provinces in Libya seemed to offer an obvious compensation for their humiliating acquiescence to the establishment of a French protectorate in Tunisia, a country coveted by Italy as a potential colony. Italy intensified its long-standing commercial interests in Libya and, in a series of diplomatic maneuvers, won from the major powers their recognition of an Italian sphere of influence there. It was assumed in European capitals that Italy would sooner or later seize the opportunity to take political and military action in Libya as well.

In September 1911 Italy engineered a crisis with Turkey charging that the Turks had committed a "hostile act" by arming Arab tribesmen in Libya. When Turkey refused to respond to an ultimatum calling for Italian military occupation to protect Italian interests in the region, Italy declared war. After a preliminary naval bombardment, Italian troops landed and captured Tripoli on October 3, encountering only slight resistance. Italian forces also occupied Tobruk, Al Khums, Darnah, and Benghazi.

In the ensuing months, the Italian expeditionary force, numbering 35,000, barely penetrated beyond its several beachheads. The 5,000 Turkish troops defending the provinces at the time of the invasion withdrew inland a few kilometers, where officers such as Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) organized the Arab tribes in a resistance to the Italians that took on the aspects of a holy war. But with war threatening in the Balkans, Turkey was compelled to sue for peace with Italy. In accordance with the treaty signed at Lausanne in October 1912, the sultan issued a decree granting independence to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica while Italy simultaneously announced its formal annexation of those territories. The sultan, in his role as caliph (leader of Islam), was to retain his religious jurisdiction there and was permitted to appoint the qadi of Tripoli, who supervised the sharia courts. But the Italians were unable to appreciate that no distinction was made between civil and religious jurisdiction in Islamic law. Thus, through the courts, the Turks kept open a channel of influence over their former subjects and subverted Italian authority. Peace with Turkey meant for Italy the
beginning of a twenty-year colonial war in Libya.

For many Arabs, Turkey's surrender in Libya was a betrayal of Muslim interests to the infidels. The 1912 Treaty of Lausanne was meaningless to the beduin tribesmen who continued their war against the Italians, in some areas with the aid of Turkish troops left behind in the withdrawal. Fighting in Cyrenaica was conducted by Sanusi units under Ahmad ash Sharif, whose followers in Fezzan and southern Tripolitania prevented Italian consolidation in those areas as well. Lacking the unity imposed by the Sanusis, resistance in northern Tripolitania was isolated, and tribal rivalries made it less effective. Urban nationalists in Tripoli theorized about the possibility of establishing a Tripolitanian republic, perhaps associated with Italy, while Suleiman Baruni, a Berber and a former member of the Turkish parliament, proclaimed an independent but short-lived Berber state in the Gharyan region. For the beduins, however, unencumbered by any sense of nationhood, the purpose of the struggle against the colonial power was defending Islam and the free life they had always enjoyed in their tribal territory.

In 1914 the Sanusis counterattacked in Fezzan, quickly wiping out recent Italian gains there, and in April 1915 they inflicted heavy casualties on an Italian column at Qasr Bu Hadi in the Sirtica. Captured rifles, artillery, and munitions fueled a subsequent Sanusi strike into Tripolitania, but the success of the campaign was compromised by the traditional hostility that existed between the beduins and the nationalists.

When Italy joined the Allied Powers in 1915, the first Italo-Sanusi war (1914-17) in Cyrenaica became part of the world war. Germany and Turkey sent arms and advisers to Ahmad, who aligned the Sanusis with the Central Powers with the objective of tying down Italian and British troops in North Africa. In 1916, however, Turkish officers led the Sanusis on a campaign into Egypt, where they were routed by British forces. Ahmad gave up Sanusi political and military leadership to Idris and fled to Turkey aboard a German submarine. The pro-British Idris opened negotiations with the Allies on behalf of Cyrenaica in 1917. The result was, in effect, a truce rather than a conclusive peace treaty, for neither the Italians nor the Sanusis fully surrendered their claims and control in the region. Britain and Italy recognized Idris as amir of interior Cyrenaica, with the condition that Sanusi attacks on coastal towns and into Egypt cease. Further consideration of Cyrenaica's status was deferred until after the war.

Although the victorious Allied Powers accepted Italy's sovereignty in Libya, Italian forces there at the end of World War I were still confined to the coastal enclaves, sometimes under conditions of siege. A campaign was initiated to consolidate and expand Italian-held territory in 1919, but the colonial policy pursued by the Italian government was moderate and accommodating. Steps were taken toward granting limited
political rights to the people in occupied areas. The provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were treated as separate colonies, and Fezzan was organized as a military territory. The Fundamental Law approved by the Italian parliament in 1919 provided for provincial parliaments and for local advisory councils appointed by the Italian governors and district executives in the occupied areas.

The different settlements that Italy made in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, however, did illustrate graphically the dissimilarities in the situations of the two provinces as they were perceived by Italian authorities. In 1920 an accord was reached between Italy and the Sanusi leaders that confirmed Idris as amir of Cyrenaica and recognized his virtual independence in an immense area in the interior that encompassed all the principal oases. Italy provided a subsidy to the amir's government, and Sanusi shaykhs, holding seats in the Cyrenaican parliament, participated in the government of the entire province. Idris was also allowed to retain the Sanusi army, although its units were to be stationed in "mixed camps" with Italian forces. By this arrangement, the Italian government officially accepted Idris as both secular and religious leader of the Cyrenaican tribes, but in effect it did not extend his political power beyond what he already exercised as head of the Sanusi order.

Clearly, the Rome government had not formulated a coherent policy toward a country that had not been conquered and whose people were dubious about the benefits of Italian rule. But because the Italians never faced a credible, united opposition in Tripolitania, they were not under comparable pressure there to yield the concessions they had made in Cyrenaica. Tripolitania lacked the leadership and organizational structure that Idris and the Sanusi order gave to Cyrenaica. The most prominent Tripolitanian nationalist was Ramadan as Suwaythi, who had by turns cooperated with the Italians, supported the Sanusis, and eventually fought against them both. His rival, Baruni, who had acted during the war as Ottoman "governor" in Tripolitania with German backing, was mistrusted by the Arab nationalists. Tribal rivalries were intense, and the aims of the beduin shaykhs and the nationalists were fundamentally different, the latter being concerned with forming a centralized republic while the former were interested primarily in creating tribal states.

A prominent pan-Arab nationalist, the Egyptian Abdar Rahman Azzam, persuaded Suwaythi and Baruni to cooperate in demanding Italian recognition of an independent republic that was called into being at Misratah in 1919. Talks with the Italians broke down when the Misratah republic's governing body, the so-called Reform Committee, claimed jurisdiction over Libya rather than over Tripolitania only. In 1920 delegates from both occupied and unoccupied zones convened the National Congress at Aziza. Claiming to represent the "Tripolitanian Nation," they called for the withdrawal of the Italian forces. No nationalist movement, however, was able to rally the country behind it.

Even delegates to the National Congress had been sharply divided on the degree of cooperation with Italy they would allow. Rival delegations
beat a path to Rome with their petitions for recognition. Meanwhile, Count Giuseppe Volpi, a vigorous and determined governor, gave decisive direction to Italian policy in Tripolitania with his advocacy of military pacification rather than negotiation. The nationalists lost their most effective leaders when Baruni defected to the Italians as a result of hostility between Arabs and Berbers, which Volpi successfully exploited, and Suwaythi was killed by his political rivals.

In this situation, the Tripolitanian nationalists met with the Sanusis at Surt early in 1922 and offered to accept Idris as amir of Tripolitania. Idris had never sought any title other than the one he held in Cyrenaica, and he was not anxious to extend either his political influence or his religious leadership to northern Tripolitania, where neither he nor the Sanusí order was widely popular. He had always refused aid to Tripolitanian nationalists and under the circumstances considered their offer to have been made for reasons of expediency, that is, because there was no alternative candidate for leadership apparent at the time. Idris' acceptance, as the nationalists understood, would draw sharp Italian disapproval and be the signal for the resumption of open warfare. War with Italy, in any event, appeared likely sooner or later. For several months, Idris pondered the nationalist appeal. For whatever reason—perhaps to further the cause of total independence or perhaps out of a sense of religious obligation to resist the infidel—Idris accepted the amirate of all Libya in November and then, to avoid capture by the Italians, fled to Egypt, where he continued to guide the Sanusí order.

Italian colonial policy was abruptly altered with the accession to power of Mussolini's fascist government in October 1922. Mussolini, the one-time critic of colonialism, wholeheartedly endorsed Volpi's policy of military pacification and, although accurate intelligence was lacking in Rome, he fully supported the decisions made in the field by army commanders. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne between the Allied Powers—including Italy—and Atatürk's new government in Turkey made final the dismemberment of the old Ottoman Empire and provided conclusive international sanction for Italy's annexation of Libya.

The second Italo-Sanusi war commenced early in 1923 with the Italian occupation of Sanusi territory in the Benghazi area. Resistance in Cyrenaica was fierce from the outset, but northern Tripolitania was subdued in 1923, and its southern region and Fezzan were gradually pacified over the next several years. During the whole period, however, the principal Italian theater of operations was Cyrenaica.

In Idris' absence a hardy but aging shaykh, Umar al Mukhtar, had overall command of Sanusi fighting forces in Cyrenaica, never numbering more than a few thousand organized in tribal units. Mukhtar, a veteran of many campaigns, was a master of desert guerrilla tactics. Leading small, mobile bands, he attacked outposts, ambushed troop columns, cut lines
of supply and communication, and then faded into the familiar terrain. Italian forces, under Rudolfo Graziani’s command after 1929, were largely composed of Eritreans. Unable to fight a decisive battle with the Sanusis, Graziani imposed an exhausting war of attrition, conducting unremitting search-and-destroy missions with armored columns and air support against the oases and tribal camps that sheltered Mukhtar's men. Troops herded beduins into concentration camps, blocked wells, and slaughtered livestock. In 1930 Graziani directed construction of a barbed-wire barrier 9 meters wide and 1.5 meters high stretching 320 kilometers from the coast south along the Egyptian frontier to cut Mukhtar off from his sanctuaries and sources of supply across the border. The area around the barrier, constantly patrolled by armor and aircraft, was designated a free-fire zone. The Italians' superior manpower and technology began to take their toll on the Libyans, but Mukhtar fought on with his steadily dwindling numbers in a shrinking theater of operations, more from habit than from conviction that the Italians could be dislodged from Cyrenaica.

Al Kufrah, the last Sanusi stronghold, fell in 1931, and in September of that year Mukhtar was captured. After a summary courtmartial, he was hanged before a crowd of 20,000 Arabs assembled to witness the event. With the death of Mukhtar, Sanusi resistance collapsed, and the Italian pacification of Libya was completed. Even in defeat, Mukhtar remained a symbol of Arab defiance to colonial domination, and he was revered as a national hero.

Once pacification had been accomplished, fascist Italy endeavored to convert Libya into an Italian province to be referred to popularly as Italy's Fourth Shore. In 1934 Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were divided into four provinces--Tripoli, Misratah, Benghazi, and Darnah--which were formally linked as a single colony known as Libya, thus officially resurrecting the name that Diocletian had applied nearly 1,500 years earlier. Fezzan, designated as South Tripolitania, remained a military territory. A governor general, called the first consul after 1937, was in overall direction of the colony, assisted by the General Consultative Council, on which Arabs were represented. Traditional tribal councils, formerly sanctioned by the Italian administration, were abolished, and all local officials were thereafter appointed by the governor general. Administrative posts at all levels were held by Italians.

An accord with Britain and Egypt obtained the transfer of a corner of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, known as the Sarra Triangle, to Italian control in 1934. The next year, a French-Italian agreement was negotiated that relocated the 1,000-kilometer border between Libya and Chad southward about 100 kilometers across the Aouzou Strip, but this territorial concession to Italy was never ratified by the French legislature. In 1939 Libya was incorporated into metropolitan Italy.
During the 1930s, impressive strides were made in improving the country's economic and transportation infrastructure. Italy invested capital and technology in public works projects, extension and modernization of cities, highway and railroad construction, expanded port facilities, and irrigation, but these measures were introduced to benefit the Italian-controlled modern sector of the economy. Italian development policy after World War I had called for capital-intensive "economic colonization" intended to promote the maximum exploitation of the resources available. One of the initial Italian objectives in Libya, however, had been the relief of overpopulation and unemployment in Italy through emigration to the undeveloped colony. With security established, systematic "demographic colonization" was encouraged by Mussolini's government. A project initiated by Libya's governor, Italo Balbo, brought the first 20,000 settlers--the ventimilli--to Libya in a single convoy in October 1938. More settlers followed in 1939, and by 1940 there were approximately 110,000 Italians in Libya, constituting about 12 percent of the total population. Plans envisioned an Italian colony of 500,000 settlers by the 1960s. Libya's best land was allocated to the settlers to be brought under productive cultivation, primarily in olive groves. Settlement was directed by a state corporation, the Libyan Colonization Society, which undertook land reclamation and the building of model villages and offered a grubstake and credit facilities to the settlers it had sponsored.

The Italians made modern medical care available for the first time in Libya, improved sanitary conditions in the towns, and undertook to replenish the herds and flocks that had been depleted during the war. But, although Mussolini liked to refer to the Libyans as "Muslim Italians," little more was accomplished that directly improved the living standards of the Arab population. Beduin life was disrupted as tribal grazing lands--considered underutilized by European standards but potentially fertile if reclaimed--were purchased or confiscated for distribution to Italian settlers. Complete neglect of education for Arabs prevented the development of professional and technical training, creating a shortage of skilled workers, technicians, and administrators that had not been alleviated in the late 1980s. Sanusi leaders were harried out of the country, lodges broken up, and the order suppressed, although not extinguished.

As Europe prepared for war, Libyan nationalists at home and in exile perceived that the best chance for liberation from colonial domination lay in Italy's defeat in a larger conflict. Such an opportunity seemed to arise when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, but Mussolini's defiance of the League of Nations and the feeble reaction of Britain and France dashed Libyan hopes for the time being. Planning for liberation resumed, however, with the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. Libyan political leaders met in Alexandria, Egypt, in October to resolve past differences in the interest of future unity. Idris was accepted
as leader of the nationalist cause by Tripolitanians as well as Cyrenaicans, with the proviso that he designate an advisory committee with representatives from both regions to assist him. Differences between the two groups were too deep and long held, however, for the committee to work well.

When Italy entered the war on the side of Germany on June 10, 1940, the Cyrenaican leaders, who for some months had been in contact with British military officers in Egypt, immediately declared their support for the Allies. In Tripolitania, where Italian control was strongest, some opinion initially opposed cooperation with Britain on the ground that if the Allies lost--which seemed highly possible in 1940--retribution would be severe. But the Cyrenaicans, with their long history of resistance to the Italians, were anxious to resume the conflict and reminded the timid Tripolitanians that conditions in the country could be no worse than they already were. Idris pointed out that it would be of little use to expect the British to support Libyan independence after the war if Libyans had not cooperated actively with them during the war.

Idris presided over a meeting of Libyan leaders hastily summoned to Cairo in August 1940, at which formal arrangements for cooperation with British military authorities were initiated. Delegates to the conference expressed full confidence in Idris in a resolution and granted him extensive powers to negotiate with the British for Libya's independence. The resolution stated further that Libyan participation with British forces should be "under the banner of the Sanusi Amirate" and that a "provisional Sanusi government" should be established. Although a number of Tripolitanian representatives agreed to participate, the resolution was essentially a Cyrenaican measure adopted over the objections of the Tripolitanian nationalists. The Tripolitanians, suspicious of the ties between Idris and the British, held that a definite statement endorsing Libyan independence should have been obtained from Britain before Idris committed Libya to full-scale military cooperation. Also, although the Tripolitanians were reluctantly willing to accept Idris as their political chief, they rejected any religious connection with the Sanusi order. Hence they objected to the use of the term Sanusi throughout the resolution in place of Libya or even Cyrenaica. These two areas of objection--the extent of the commitment to Britain and the role of the Sanusi order in an independent, united Libya--constituted the main elements of internal political dissension during the war and early postwar years.

British officials maintained that major postwar agreements or guarantees could not be undertaken while the war was still in progress. Although he endeavored from time to time to secure a more favorable British commitment, Idris generally accepted this position and counseled his followers to have patience. Clearly, many of them were not enthusiastic about Libyan unity and would have been satisfied with the promise of a Sanusi government in Cyrenaica. After the August 1940 resolution, five Libyan battalions were organized by the British, recruited largely from Cyrenaican veterans of the Italo-Sanusi wars. The Libyan Arab Force,
better known as the Sanusi Army, served with distinction under British command through the campaigns of the desert war that ended in the liberation of Cyrenaica.

In a speech in the House of Commons in January 1942, British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden acknowledged and welcomed "the contribution which Sayid Idris as Sanusi and his followers have made and are making" to the Allied war effort. He added that the British government was determined that the Sanusis in Cyrenaica should "in no circumstances again fall under Italian domination." No further commitment was made, and this statement, which made no mention of an independent Libya, remained the official British position during the war.

North Africa was a major theater of operations in World War II, and the war shifted three times across the face of Cyrenaica, a region described by one German general as a "tactician's paradise and a quartermaster's hell" because there were no natural defense positions between Al Agheila and Al Alamein to obstruct the tanks that fought fluid battles in the desert like warships at sea, and there was only one major highway on the coast along which to supply the quick-moving armies. The Italians invaded Egypt in September 1940, but the drive stalled at Sidi Barrani for want of logistical support. British Empire forces of the Army of the Nile, under General Archibald Wavell, counterattacked sharply in December, advancing as far as Tobruk by the end of the month. In February 1941, the Italian Tenth Army surrendered, netting Wavell 150,000 prisoners and leaving all of Cyrenaica in British hands. At no time during the campaign did Wavell have more than two full divisions at his disposal against as many as ten Italian divisions.

In March and April, Axis forces, stiffened by the arrival of the German Afrika Korps commanded by Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel, launched an offensive into Cyrenaica that cut off British troops at Tobruk. The battle seesawed back and forth in the desert as Rommel attempted to stabilize his lines along the Egyptian frontier before dealing with Tobruk in his rear, but in November British Eighth Army commander General Claude Auchinleck caught him off balance with a thrust into Cyrenaica that succeeded in relieving Tobruk, where the garrison had held out for seven months behind its defense perimeter. Auchinleck's offensive failed in its second objective--cutting off Rommel from his line of retreat.

Rommel pulled back in good order to Al Agheila, where his troops refitted for a new offensive in January 1942 that was intended to take the Axis forces to the Suez Canal. Rommel's initial attack was devastating in its boldness and swiftness. Cyrenaica had been retaken by June; Tobruk fell in a day. Rommel drove into Egypt, but his offensive was halted at Al Alamein, 100 kilometers from Alexandria. The opposing armies
settled down into a stalemate in the desert as British naval and air power interdicted German convoys and road transport, gradually starving Rommel of supplies and reinforcements.

Late in October the Eighth Army, under the command of General Bernard Montgomery, broke through the Axis lines at Al Alamein in a massive offensive that sent German and Italian forces into a headlong retreat. The liberation of Cyrenaica was completed for the second time in November. Tripoli fell to the British in January 1943, and by mid-February the last Axis troops had been driven from Libya.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Hapsburg Spain and the Ottoman Turks were pitted in a struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean. Spanish forces had already occupied a number of other North African ports when in 1510 they captured Tripoli, destroyed the city, and constructed a fortified naval base from the rubble. Tripoli was of only marginal importance to Spain, however, and in 1524 the king-emperor Charles V entrusted its defense to the Knights of St. John of Malta.

Piracy, which for both Christians and Muslims was a dimension of the conflict between the opposing powers, lured adventurers from around the Mediterranean to the Maghribi coastal towns and islands. Among them was Khair ad Din, called Barbarossa, who in 1510 seized Algiers on the pretext of defending it from the Spaniards. Barbarossa subsequently recognized the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan over the territory that he controlled and was in turn appointed the sultan's regent in the Maghrib. Using Algiers as their base, Barbarossa and his successors consolidated Ottoman authority in the central Maghrib, extended it to Tunisia and Tripolitania, and threatened Morocco. In 1551 the knights were driven out of Tripoli by the Turkish admiral, Sinan Pasha. In the next year Draughut Pasha, a Turkish pirate captain named governor by the sultan, restored order in the coastal towns and undertook the pacification of the Arab nomads in Tripolitania, although he admitted the difficulty of subduing a people "who carry their cities with them." Only in the 1580s did the rulers of Fezzan give their allegiance to the sultan, but the Turks refrained from trying to exercise any influence there. Ottoman authority was also absent in Cyrenaica, although a bey (commander) was stationed at Benghazi late in the next century to act as agent of the government in Tripoli.

Separate British military governments were established in Cyrenaica and in Tripolitania and continued to function until Libya achieved independence. Each was divided into several districts governed by civil affairs officers who reported to brigadiers at senior headquarters in Benghazi and Tripoli. British authority was exercised under the Hague
Convention, which conveyed legislative, administrative, and judicial power to an occupying country. It was essentially a caretaker operation, the initial objective simply being to maintain peace and order and facilitate the war effort. British military officers and government emphatically stressed the nonpolitical character of the occupation government.

The British administration began the training of a badly needed Libyan civil service. Italian administrators continued to be employed in Tripoli, however. The Italian legal code remained in effect for the duration of the war. In the lightly populated Fezzan region, a French military administration formed a counterpart to the British operation. With British approval, Free French forces moved north from Chad to take control of the territory in January 1943. French administration was directed by a staff stationed in Sabha, but it was largely exercised through Fezzan notables of the family of Sayf an Nasr. At the lower echelons, French troop commanders acted in both military and civil capacities according to customary French practice in the Algerian Sahara. In the west, Ghat was attached to the French military region of southern Algeria and Ghadamis to the French command of southern Tunisia--giving rise to Libyan nationalist fears that French intentions might include the ultimate detachment of Fezzan from Libya.

Disposition of Italian colonial holdings was a question that had to be considered before the peace treaty officially ending the war with Italy could be completed. Technically, Libya remained an Italian possession administered by Britain and France, but at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 the Allies--Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States--agreed that the Italian colonies seized during the war should not be returned to Italy. Further consideration of the question was delegated to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, which included a French representative; although all council members initially favored some form of trusteeship, no formula could be devised for disposing of Libya. The United States suggested a trusteeship for the whole country under control of the United Nations (UN), whose charter had become effective in October 1945, to prepare it for self-government. The Soviet Union proposed separate provincial trusteeships, claiming Tripolitania for itself and assigning Fezzan to France and Cyrenaica to Britain. France, seeing no end to the discussions, advocated the return of the territory to Italy. To break the impasse, Britain finally recommended immediate independence for Libya.

The peace treaty, in which Italy renounced all claims to its African possessions, was signed in February 1947 and became effective in September. The language of the treaty was vague on the subject of colonies, adding only that these territories should "remain in their present state until their future is decided." This indefinite proviso disappointed Libyan leaders, who had earlier been alarmed at Italian
diplomatic agitation for return of the colonies. Libyans were apprehensive that Italian hegemony might return in some ostensibly nonpolitical guise if Italy were given responsibility for preparing the country for independence.

By mutual agreement the settlement of the Italian colonies was postponed for a year after the treaty became effective, during which time the Big Four (Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States) were to search for a solution. If none could be found, the question was to be put before the UN General Assembly. A four-power commission of investigation was appointed to ascertain what the Libyan people desired. Although the various regional parties split over the question of the future status of their respective provinces, the majority of Libyans favored independence. The commission, however, decided that the country was not ready for self-government. Other governments interested in the settlement of the problem, notably Italy and Egypt, were consulted. In all cases, conflicting interests prevented any solution, and in due course the Libyan question was placed on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Idris had returned to Libya to a tumultuous welcome in 1944, but he declined to take up residence there until satisfied that all constraints of foreign control not subject to his agreement had been removed. At British urging, he resumed permanent residence in Cyrenaica in 1947; in 1949, with British backing, he unilaterally proclaimed Cyrenaica an independent amirate.

In the meantime, Britain and Italy had placed the Bevin-Sforza plan (after Ernest Bevin and Carlo Sforza, foreign ministers of its respective sponsors) before the UN for its consideration. Under this plan, Libya would come under UN trusteeship, and responsibility for administration in Tripolitania would be delegated to Italy, in Cyrenaica to Britain, and in Fezzan to France. At the end of ten years, Libya would become independent. Over Libyan protests, the plan was adopted by the UN Political Committee in May 1949, only to fall short by one vote of the two-thirds majority required for adoption by the General Assembly. No further proposals were submitted, but protracted negotiations led to a compromise solution that was embodied in a UN resolution in November 1949. This resolution called for the establishment of a sovereign state including all three historic regions of Libya by January 1952. A UN commissioner and the so-called Council of Ten-- composed of a representative from each of the three provinces, one for the Libyan minorities, and one each for Egypt, France, Italy, Pakistan, Britain, and the United States--were to guide Libya through the period of transition to independence and to assist a Libyan national assembly in drawing up a constitution. In the final analysis, indecision on the part of the major powers had precipitated the creation of an independent state and forced the union of provinces hitherto divided by geography and history.

The General Assembly named Adrian Pelt of the Netherlands as commissioner for Libya. Severe problems confronted him and his staff in preparing for independence an economically backward and politically inexperienced country, almost totally lacking in trained managerial and
technical personnel, physicians, and teachers. Of Libya's approximately 1 million inhabitants, at least 90 percent were illiterate. Libya's biggest source of income was from scrap metal salvaged from the World War II battlefields. There were no known natural resources—even Libya's sand was inadequate for glassmaking—and it was obvious that the country would be dependent on foreign economic aid for an indefinite period. Pelt argued forcefully that Italian settlers should be encouraged to remain in Libya, first, because the land they worked was private property that could not be expropriated legally, and, second, because their presence represented a long-term investment that was essential to any further economic development in the country.

Historically, the administration of Libya had been united for only a few years—and those under Italian rule. Many groups vied for influence over the people but, although all parties desired independence, there was no consensus as to what form of government was to be established. The social basis of political organization varied from region to region. In Cyrenaica and Fezzan, the tribe was the chief focus of social identification, even in an urban context. Idris had wide appeal in the former as head of the Sanusi order, while in the latter the Sayf an Nasr clan commanded a following as paramount tribal chieftains. In Tripolitania, by contrast, loyalty that in a social context was reserved largely to the family and kinship group could be transferred more easily to a political party and its leader. Tripolitans, following the lead of Bashir as Sadawi's National Congress Party, pressed for a republican form of government in a unitary state. Inasmuch as their region had a significantly larger population and a relatively more advanced economy that the other two, they expected that under a unitary political system political power would gravitate automatically to Tripoli. Cyrenaicans, who had achieved a larger degree of cohesion under Sanusi leadership, feared the chaos they saw in Tripolitania and the threat of being swamped politically by the Tripolitans in a unitary state. Guided by the National Front, endorsed by Idris initially to advocate unilateral independence for Cyrenaica, they backed formation of a federation with a weak central government that would permit local autonomy under Idris as amir. But even in Cyrenaica a cleavage existed between an older generation that thought instinctively in provincial terms and a younger generation—many of whom were influenced by their membership in the Umar al Mukhtar Club, a political action group first formed in 1942 with Idris' blessing but by 1947 tending toward republican and nationalist views—whose outlook reflected the rise of pan-Arab political nationalism, already a strong force in the Middle East and growing in Libya.

To implement the General Assembly's directive, Pelt approved the appointment of the Preparatory Committee of Twenty-One to determine the composition of a national constitutional convention. The committee included seven members from each province, nominated in Cyrenaica by Idris, in Fezzan by the Sayf an Nasr chieftains, and in Tripolitania by the grand mufti (chief religious judge) of Tripoli, who also acted as its chairman. Nationalists objected that the committee represented traditional regional interests and could not reflect the will of the Libyan
people as the General Assembly had intended.

The product of the committee's deliberations was the creation of the National Constituent Assembly, in which each of the three provinces was equally represented. Meeting for the first time in November 1950, the assembly approved a federal system of government with a monarchy, despite dissent from Tripolitanian delegates, and offered the throne to Idris. Committees of the assembly drafted a constitution, which was duly adopted in October 1951. Meanwhile, internal administrative authority had already been transferred by British and French administrations to the regional governments--and in Cyrenaica to the independent Sanusi amirate. On December 24, 1951, King Idris I proclaimed the independence of the United Kingdom of Libya as a sovereign state.

Under the constitution of October 1951, the federal monarchy of Libya was headed by King Idris as chief of state, with succession to his designated heirs. Substantial political power resided with the king. The executive arm of the government consisted of a prime minister and Council of Ministers designated by the king but also responsible to the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of a bicameral legislature. The Senate, or upper house, consisted of eight representatives from each of the three provinces. Half of the senators were nominated by the king, who also had the right to veto legislation and to dissolve the lower house. Local autonomy in the provinces was exercised through provincial governments and legislatures. Benghazi and Tripoli served alternately as the national capital.

Several factors, rooted in Libya's history, affected the political development of the newly independent country. They reflected the differing political orientations of the provinces and the ambiguities inherent in Libya's monarchy. First, after the first general elections, which were held on February 19, 1952, political parties were abolished. The National Congress Party, which had campaigned against a federal form of government, was defeated throughout the country. The party was outlawed, and Sadawi was deported. Second, provincial ties continued to be more important than national ones, and the federal and provincial governments were constantly in dispute over their respective spheres of authority. A third problem derived from the lack of a direct heir to the throne. To remedy this situation, Idris in 1953 designated his sixty-year-old brother to succeed him. When the original heir apparent died, the king appointed his nephew, Prince Hasan ar Rida, his successor.

In its foreign policy, Libya maintained a pro-Western stance and was recognized as belonging to the conservative traditionalist bloc in the League of Arab States (Arab League), of which it became a member in 1953. The same year Libya concluded a twenty-year treaty of friendship and alliance with Britain under which the latter received military bases in exchange for financial and military assistance. The next year, Libya
and the United States signed an agreement under which the United States also obtained military base rights, subject to renewal in 1970, in return for economic aid to Libya. The most important of the United States installations in Libya was Wheelus Air Base, near Tripoli, considered a strategically valuable installation in the 1950s and early 1960s. Reservations set aside in the desert were used by British and American military aircraft based in Europe as practice firing ranges. Libya forged close ties with France, Italy, Greece, and Turkey, and established full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1955, but declined a Soviet offer of economic aid.

As part of a broad assistance package, the UN Technical Assistance Board agreed to sponsor a technical aid program that emphasized the development of agriculture and education. Foreign powers, notably Britain and the United States, provided development aid. Steady economic improvement occurred, but the pace was slow, and Libya remained a poor and underdeveloped country heavily dependent on foreign aid.

This situation changed suddenly and dramatically in June 1959 when research prospectors from Esso (later renamed Exxon) confirmed the location of major petroleum deposits at Zaltan in Cyrenaica. Further discoveries followed, and commercial development was quickly initiated by concession holders who returned 50 percent of their profits to the Libyan government in taxes. In the petroleum market, Libya's advantages lay not only in the quantity but also in the high quality of its crude product. Libya's proximity and direct linkage to Europe by sea were further marketing advantages. The discovery and exploitation of petroleum turned the vast, sparsely populated, impoverished country into a independently wealthy nation with potential for extensive development and thus constituted a major turning point in Libyan history.

As development of petroleum resources progressed in the early 1960s, Libya launched its first Five-Year Plan, 1963-68. One negative result of the new wealth from petroleum, however, was a decline in agricultural production, largely through neglect. Internal Libyan politics continued to be stable, but the federal form of government had proven inefficient and cumbersome. In April 1963, Prime Minister Muhi ad Din Fakini secured adoption by parliament of a bill, endorsed by the king, that abolished the federal form of government, establishing in its place a unitary, monarchical state with a dominant central government. By legislation, the historical divisions of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan were to be eliminated and the country divided into ten new provinces, each headed by an appointed governor. The legislature revised the constitution in 1963 to reflect the change from a federal to a unitary state.

In regional affairs, Libya enjoyed the advantage of not having aggravated boundary disputes with its neighbors. Libya was one of the thirty founding members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963, and in November 1964 participated with Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia in forming a joint consultative committee aimed at economic cooperation among North African states. Although it
supported Arab causes, including the Moroccan and Algerian independence movements, Libya took little active part in the Arab-Israeli dispute or the tumultuous inter-Arab politics of the 1950s and the early 1960s.

Nevertheless, the brand of Arab nationalism propounded by Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser exercised an increasing influence, particularly among the younger generation. In response to anti-Western agitation in 1964, Libya's essentially pro-Western government requested the evacuation of British and American bases before the dates specified in the treaties. Most British forces were in fact withdrawn in 1966, although the evacuation of foreign military installations, including Wheelus Air Base, was not completed until March 1970.

The June 1967 War between Israel and its Arab neighbors aroused a strong reaction in Libya, particularly in Tripoli and Benghazi, where dock and oil workers as well as students were involved in violent demonstrations. The United States and British embassies and oil company offices were damaged in rioting. Members of the small Jewish community were also attacked, prompting the emigration of almost all remaining Libyan Jews. The government restored order, but thereafter attempts to modernize the small and ineffective Libyan armed forces and to reform the grossly inefficient Libyan bureaucracy foundered upon conservative opposition to the nature and pace of the proposed reforms.

Although Libya was clearly on record as supporting Arab causes in general, the country did not play an important role in Arab politics. At the Arab summit conference held at Khartoum in September 1967, however, Libya, along with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, agreed to provide generous subsidies from oil revenues to aid Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, defeated in June by Israel. Also, Idris first broached the idea of taking collective action to increase the price of oil on the world market. Libya, nonetheless, continued its close association with the West, while Idris' government steered an essentially conservative course at home.

After the forming of the Libyan state in 1963, Idris' government had tried—not very successfully—to promote a sense of Libyan nationalism built around the institution of the monarchy. But Idris himself was first and foremost a Cyrenaican, never at ease in Tripolitania. His political interests were essentially Cyrenaican, and he understood that whatever real power he had—and it was more considerable than what he derived from the constitution—lay in the loyalty he commanded as amir of Cyrenaica and head of the Sanusi order. Idris' pro-Western sympathies and identification with the conservative Arab bloc were especially resented by an increasingly politicized urban elite that favored nonalignment. Aware of the potential of their country's natural wealth, many Libyans had also become conscious that its benefits reached very few of the population. An ominous undercurrent of dissatisfaction with corruption and malfaisance in the bureaucracy began to appear as well, particularly among young officers of the armed forces who were influenced by Nasser's Arab nationalist ideology.
Alienated from the most populous part of the country, from the cities, and from a younger generation of Libyans, Idris spent more and more time at his palace in Darnah, near the British military base. In June 1969, the king left the country for rest and medical treatment in Greece and Turkey, leaving Crown Prince Hasan ar Rida as regent.

On September 1, 1969, in a daring coup d'état, a group of about seventy young army officers and enlisted men, mostly assigned to the Signal Corps, seized control of the government and in a stroke abolished the Libyan monarchy. The coup was launched at Benghazi, and within two hours the takeover was completed. Army units quickly rallied in support of the coup, and within a few days firmly established military control in Tripoli and elsewhere throughout the country. Popular reception of the coup, especially by younger people in the urban areas, was enthusiastic. Fears of resistance in Cyrenaica and Fezzan proved unfounded. No deaths or violent incidents related to the coup were reported.

The Free Officers Movement, which claimed credit for carrying out the coup, was headed by a twelve-member directorate that designated itself the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). This body constituted the Libyan government after the coup. In its initial proclamation on September 1, the RCC declared the country to be a free and sovereign state called the Libyan Arab Republic, which would proceed, with the help of God, "in the path of freedom, unity, and social justice, guaranteeing the right of equality to its citizens, and opening before them the doors of honorable work." The rule of the Turks and Italians and the "reactionary" regime just overthrown were characterized as belonging to "dark ages," from which the Libyan people were called to move forward as "free brothers" to a new age of prosperity, equality, and honor.

The RCC advised diplomatic representatives in Libya that the revolutionary changes had not been directed from outside the country, that existing treaties and agreements would remain in effect, and that foreign lives and property would be protected. Diplomatic recognition of the new regime came quickly from countries throughout the world. United States recognition was officially extended on September 6.

In view of the lack of internal resistance, it appeared that the chief danger to the new regime lay in the possibility of a reaction inspired by the absent King Idris or his designated heir, Hasan ar Rida, who had been taken into custody at the time of the coup along with other senior civil and military officials of the royal government.

Within days of the coup, however, Hasan publicly renounced all rights to the throne, stated his support for the new regime, and called on the people to accept it without violence. Idris, in an exchange of messages with the RCC through Egypt's President Nasser, dissociated himself
from reported attempts to secure British intervention and disclaimed any intention of coming back to Libya. In return, he was assured by the RCC of the safety of his family still in the country. At his own request and with Nasser's approval, Idris took up residence once again in Egypt, where he had spent his first exile and where he remained until his death in 1983.

On September 7, 1969, the RCC announced that it had appointed a cabinet to conduct the government of the new republic. An American-educated technician, Mahmud Sulayman al Maghrabi, who had been imprisoned since 1967 for his political activities, was designated prime minister. He presided over the eight-member Council of Ministers, of whom six, like Maghrabi, were civilians and two--Adam Said Hawwaz and Musa Ahmad--were military officers. Neither of the officers was a member of the RCC. The Council of Ministers was instructed to "implement the state's general policy as drawn up by the RCC," leaving no doubt where ultimate authority rested. The next day the RCC decided to promote Captain Muammar al Qadhafi to colonel and to appoint him commander in chief of the Libyan Armed Forces. Although RCC spokesmen declined until January 1970 to reveal any other names of RCC members, it was apparent from that date onward that the head of the RCC and new de facto head of state was the ascetic, deeply religious, twenty-seven-year-old Colonel Qadhafi.

Analysts were quick to point out the striking similarities between the Libyan military coup of 1969 and that in Egypt under Nasser in 1952, and it became clear that the Egyptian experience and the charismatic figure of Nasser had formed the model for the Free Officers Movement. As the RCC in the last months of 1969 moved vigorously to institute domestic reforms, it proclaimed neutrality in the confrontation between the superpowers and opposition to all forms of colonialism and "imperialism." It also made clear Libya's dedication to Arab unity and to the support of the Palestinian cause against Israel. The RCC reaffirmed the country's identity as part of the "Arab nation" and its state religion as Islam. It abolished parliamentary institutions, all legislative functions being assumed by the RCC, and continued the prohibition against political parties, in effect since 1952. The new regime categorically rejected communism--in large part because it was atheistic--and officially espoused an Arab interpretation of socialism that integrated Islamic principles with social, economic, and political reform. Libya had shifted, virtually overnight, from the camp of conservative Arab traditionalist states to that of the radical nationalist states.

Muammar al Qadhafi was born in a beduin tent in the desert near Surt in 1942. His family belongs to a small tribe of Arabized Berbers, the Qadhafa, who are stockherders with holdings in the Hun Oasis. As a boy, Qadhafi attended a Muslim elementary school, during which time the major events occurring in the Arab world--the Arab defeat in Palestine in
1948 and Nasser's rise to power in Egypt in 1952--profoundly influenced him. He finished his secondary school studies under a private tutor in Misratah, paying particular attention to the study of history.

Qadhafi formed the essential elements of his political philosophy and his world view as a schoolboy. His education was entirely Arabic and strongly Islamic, much of it under Egyptian teachers. From this education and his desert background, Qadhafi derived his devoutness and his austere, even puritanical, code of personal conduct and morals. Essentially an Arab populist, Qadhafi held family ties to be important and upheld the beduin code of egalitarian simplicity and personal honor, distrusting sophisticated, axiomatically corrupt, urban politicians. Qadhafi's ideology, fed by Radio Cairo during his formative years, was an ideology of renascent Arab nationalism on the Egyptian model, with Nasser as hero and the Egyptian revolution as a guide.

In Libya, as in a number of other Arab countries, admission to the military academy and a career as an army officer became available to members of the lower economic strata only after independence. A military career offered a new opportunity for higher education, for upward economic and social mobility, and was for many the only available means of political action and rapid change. For Qadhafi and many of his fellow officers, who were animated by Nasser's brand of Arab nationalism as well as by an intense hatred of Israel, a military career was a revolutionary vocation.

Qadhafi entered the Libyan military academy at Binghazi in 1961 and, along with most of his colleagues from the RCC, graduated in the 1965-66 period. After receiving his commission, he was selected for several months of further training at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, England. Qadhafi's association with the Free Officers Movement began during his days as a cadet. The frustration and shame felt by Libyan officers who stood by helplessly at the time of Israel's swift and humiliating defeat of Arab armies on three fronts in 1967 fueled their determination to contribute to Arab unity by overthrowing the Libyan monarchy.

At the onset of RCC rule, Qadhafi and his associates insisted that their government would not rest on individual leadership, but rather on collegial decision making. However, Qadhafi's ascetic but colorful personality, striking appearance, energy, and intense ideological style soon created an impression of Qadhafi as dictator and the balance of the RCC as little more than his rubber stamp. This impression was inaccurate and although some members were more pragmatic, less demonstrative, or less ascetic than Qadhafi, the RCC showed a high degree of uniformity in political and economic outlook and in dedication. Fellow RCC members were loyal to Qadhafi as group leader, observers believed, not because of bureaucratic subservience to his dictatorial power, but because they were in basic agreement with him and with the revolutionary Arab nationalist ideals that he articulated.

Although the RCC's principle of conducting executive operations
through a predominantly civilian cabinet of technician administrators remained strong, circumstances and pressures brought about modifications. The first major cabinet change occurred soon after the first challenge to the regime. In December 1969, Adam Said Hawwaz, the minister of defense, and Musa Ahmad, the minister of interior, were arrested and accused of planning a coup. In the new cabinet formed after the crisis, Qadhafi, retaining his post as chairman of the RCC, also became prime minister and defense minister. Major Abdel Salam Jallud, generally regarded as second only to Qadhafi in the RCC, became deputy prime minister and minister of interior. This cabinet totaled thirteen members, of whom five were RCC officers. The regime was challenged a second time in July 1970 when Abdullah Abid Sanusi, a distant cousin of former King Idris, and members of the Sayf an Nasr clan of Fezzan were accused of plotting to seize power for themselves. After the plot was foiled, a substantial cabinet change occurred, RCC officers for the first time forming a majority among new ministers.

From the start, RCC spokesmen had indicated a serious intent to bring the "defunct regime" to account. In 1971 and 1972 more than 200 former government officials—including 7 prime ministers and numerous cabinet ministers—as well as former King Idris and members of the royal family, were brought to trial on charges of treason and corruption. Many, who like Idris lived in exile, were tried in absentia. Although a large percentage of those charged were acquitted, sentences of up to fifteen years in prison and heavy fines were imposed on others. Five death sentences, all but one of them in absentia, were pronounced, among them, one against Idris. Fatima, the former queen, and Hasan ar Rida were sentenced to five and three years in prison, respectively.

Meanwhile, Qadhafi and the RCC had disbanded the Sanusi order and officially downgraded its historical role in achieving Libya's independence. They attacked regional and tribal differences as obstructions in the path of social advancement and Arab unity, dismissing traditional leaders and drawing administrative boundaries across tribal groupings. A broad-based political party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), was created in 1971 and modeled after Egypt's Arab Socialist Union. Its intent was to raise the political consciousness of Libyans and to aid the RCC in formulating public policy through debate in open forums. All other political parties were proscribed. Trade unions were incorporated into the ASU and strikes forbidden. The press, already subject to censorship, was officially conscripted in 1972 as an agent of the revolution. Italians and what remained of the Jewish community were expelled from the country and their property confiscated.

After the September coup, United States forces proceeded deliberately with the planned withdrawal from Wheelus Air Base under the agreement made with the previous regime. The last of the American contingent turned the facility over to the Libyans on June 11, 1970, a date thereafter celebrated in Libya as a national holiday. As relations with the United States steadily deteriorated, Qadhafi forged close links with the Soviet Union and other East European countries, all the while maintaining Libya's stance as a nonaligned country and opposing the
spread of communism in the Arab world. Libya's army--sharply increased from the 6,000-man prerevolutionary force that had been trained and equipped by the British--was armed with Soviet-built armor and missiles.

As months passed, Qadhafi, caught up in his apocalyptic visions of revolutionary pan-Arabism and Islam locked in mortal struggle with what he termed the encircling, demonic forces of reaction, imperialism, and Zionism, increasingly devoted attention to international rather than internal affairs. As a result, routine administrative tasks fell to Major Jallud, who in 1972 became prime minister in place of Qadhafi. Two years later Jallud assumed Qadhafi's remaining administrative and protocol duties to allow Qadhafi to devote his time to revolutionary theorizing. Qadhafi remained commander in chief of the armed forces and effective head of state. The foreign press speculated about an eclipse of his authority and personality within the RCC, but Qadhafi soon dispelled such theories by his measures to restructure Libyan society.

The remaking of Libyan society that Qadhafi envisioned and to which he devoted his energies after the early 1970s formally began in 1973 with a so-called cultural or popular revolution. The revolution was designed to combat bureaucratic inefficiency, lack of public interest and participation in the subnational governmental system, and problems of national political coordination. In an attempt to instill revolutionary fervor into his compatriots and to involve large numbers of them in political affairs, Qadhafi urged them to challenge traditional authority and to take over and run government organs themselves. The instrument for doing this was the "people's committee." Within a few months, such committees were found all across Libya. They were functionally and geographically based and eventually became responsible for local and regional administration.

People's committees were established in such widely divergent organizations as universities, private business firms, government bureaucracies, and the broadcast media. Geographically based committees were formed at the governorate, municipal, and zone (lowest) levels. Seats on the people's committees at the zone level were filled by direct popular election; members so elected could then be selected for service at higher levels. By mid-1973 estimates of the number of people's committees ranged above 2,000.

In the scope of their administrative and regulatory tasks and the method of their members' selection, the people's committees embodied the concept of direct democracy that Qadhafi propounded in the first volume of *The Green Book*, which appeared in 1976. The same concept lay behind proposals to create a new political structure composed of "people's congresses." The centerpiece of the new system was the General People's Congress (GPC), a national representative body
intended to replace the RCC.

The new political order took shape in March 1977 when the GPC, at Qadhafi's behest, adopted the "Declaration of the Establishment of the People's Authority" and proclaimed the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The term *jamahiriya* is difficult to translate, but American scholar Lisa Anderson has suggested "peopledom" or "state of the masses" as a reasonable approximation of Qadhafi's concept that the people should govern themselves free of any constraints, especially those of the modern bureaucratic state. The GPC also adopted resolutions designating Qadhafi as its general secretary and creating the General Secretariat of the GPC, comprising the remaining members of the defunct RCC. It also appointed the General People's Committee, which replaced the Council of Ministers, its members now called secretaries rather than ministers.

All legislative and executive authority was vested in the GPC. This body, however, delegated most of its important authority to its general secretary and General Secretariat and to the General People's Committee. Qadhafi, as general secretary of the GPC, remained the primary decision maker, just as he had been when chairman of the RCC. In turn, all adults had the right and duty to participate in the deliberation of their local Basic People's Congress (BPC), whose decisions were passed up to the GPC for consideration and implementation as national policy. The BPCs were in theory the repository of ultimate political authority and decision making, being the embodiment of what Qadhafi termed direct "people's power." The 1977 declaration and its accompanying resolutions amounted to a fundamental revision of the 1969 constitutional proclamation, especially with respect to the structure and organization of the government at both national and subnational levels.

Continuing to revamp Libya's political and administrative structure, Qadhafi introduced yet another element into the body politic. Beginning in 1977, "revolutionary committees" were organized and assigned the task of "absolute revolutionary supervision of people's power"; that is, they were to guide the people's committees, raise the general level of political consciousness and devotion to revolutionary ideals, and guard against deviation and opposition in the BPCs. Filled with politically astute zealots, the ubiquitous revolutionary committees in 1979 assumed control of BPC elections. Although they were not official government organs, the revolutionary committees became another mainstay of the domestic political scene. As with the people's committees and other administrative innovations since the revolution, the revolutionary committees fit the pattern of imposing a new element on the existing subnational system of government rather than eliminating or consolidating already existing structures. By the late 1970s, the result was an unnecessarily complex system of overlapping jurisdictions in which cooperation and coordination among different elements were compromised by ill-defined grants of authority and responsibility.

The changes in Libyan leadership since 1976 culminated in March 1979,
when the GPC declared that the "vesting of power in the masses" and the "separation of the state from the revolution" were complete. Qadhafi relinquished his duties as general secretary of the GPC, being known thereafter as "the leader" or "Leader of the Revolution." He remained supreme commander of the armed forces. His replacement was Abdallah Ubaydi, who in effect had been prime minister since 1979. The RCC was formally dissolved and the government was again reorganized into people's committees. A new General People's Committee (cabinet) was selected, each of its "secretaries" becoming head of a specialized people's committee; the exceptions were the "secretariats" of petroleum, foreign affairs, and heavy industry, where there were no people's committees. A proposal was also made to establish a "people's army" by substituting a national militia, being formed in the late 1970s, for the national army. Although the idea surfaced again in early 1982, it did not appear to be close to implementation.

Remaking of the economy was parallel with the attempt to remold political and social institutions. Until the late 1970s, Libya's economy was mixed, with a large role for private enterprise except in the fields of oil production and distribution, banking, and insurance. But according to volume two of Qadhafi's *Green Book*, which appeared in 1978, private retail trade, rent, and wages were forms of "exploitation" that should be abolished. Instead, workers' self-management committees and profit participation partnerships were to function in public and private enterprises. A property law was passed that forbade ownership of more than one private dwelling, and Libyan workers took control of a large number of companies, turning them into state-run enterprises. Retail and wholesale trading operations were replaced by state-owned "people's supermarkets", where Libyans in theory could purchase whatever they needed at low prices. By 1981 the state had also restricted access to individual bank accounts to draw upon privately held funds for government projects.

While measures such as these undoubtedly benefitted poorer Libyans, they created resentment and opposition among the newly dispossessed. The latter joined those already alienated, some of whom had begun to leave the country. By 1982 perhaps 50,000 to 100,000 Libyans had gone abroad; because many of the emigrants were among the enterprising and better educated Libyans, they represented a significant loss of managerial and technical expertise.

Some of the exiles formed active opposition groups. Although the groups were generally ineffective, Qadhafi nevertheless in early 1979 warned opposition leaders to return home immediately or face "liquidation." A wave of assassinations of prominent Libyan exiles, mostly in Western Europe, followed. Few opponents responded to the 1979 call to "repentance" or to a similar one issued in October 1982 in which Qadhafi once again threatened liquidation of the recalcitrant, the GPC having already declared their personal property forfeit.

Internal opposition came from elements of the middle class who opposed Qadhafi's economic reforms and from students and intellectuals
who criticized his ideology. He also incurred the anger of the Islamic community for his unorthodox interpretations of the doctrine and traditions of Islam, his challenge to the authority of the religious establishment, and his contention that the ideas in *The Green Book* were compatible with and based upon Islam. Endowed Islamic properties (*habus*) were nationalized as part of Qadhafi's economic reforms, and he urged "the masses" to take over mosques.

The most serious challenges came from the armed forces, especially the officers' corps, and from the RCC. Perhaps the most important one occurred in 1975 when Minister of Planning and RCC member Major Umar Mihayshi and about thirty army officers attempted a coup after disagreements over political economic policies. The failure of the coup led to the flight of Mihayshi and part of the country's technocratic elite. In a move that signaled a new intolerance of dissent, the regime executed twenty-two of the accused army officers in 1977, the first such punishment in more than twenty years. Further executions of dissident army officers were reported in 1979, and in August 1980 several hundred people were allegedly killed in the wake of an unsuccessful army revolt centered in Tobruk.

The economic base for Libya's revolution has been its oil revenues. However, Libya's petroleum reserves were small compared with those of other major Arab petroleum-producing states. As a consequence, Libya was more ready to ration output in order to conserve its natural wealth and less responsive to moderating its price-rise demands than the other countries. Petroleum was seen both as a means of financing the economic and social development of a woefully underdeveloped country and as a political weapon to brandish in the Arab struggle against Israel.

The increase in production that followed the 1969 revolution was accompanied by Libyan demands for higher petroleum prices, a greater share of revenues, and more control over the development of the country's petroleum industry. Foreign petroleum companies agreed to a price hike of more than three times the going rate (from US$0.90 to US$3.45 per barrel) early in 1971. In December the Libyan government suddenly nationalized the holdings of British Petroleum in Libya and withdrew funds amounting to approximately US$550 million invested in British banks as a result of a foreign policy dispute. British Petroleum rejected as inadequate a Libyan offer of compensation, and the British treasury banned Libya from participation in the sterling area. In 1973 the Libyan government announced the nationalization of a controlling interest in all other petroleum companies operating in the country. This step gave Libya control of about 60 percent of its domestic oil production by early 1974, a figure that subsequently rose to 70 percent. Total nationalization was out of the question, given the need for foreign expertise and funds in oil exploration, production, and distribution.
Insisting on the continued use of petroleum as leverage against Israel and its supporters in the West, Libya strongly supported formation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1973, and Libyan militancy was partially responsible for OPEC measures to raise oil prices, impose embargoes, and gain control of production. As a consequence of such policies, Libya's oil production declined by half between 1970 and 1974, while revenues from oil exports more than quadrupled. Production continued to fall, bottoming out at an eleven-year low in 1975 at a time when the government was preparing to invest large amounts of petroleum revenues in other sectors of the economy. Thereafter, output stabilized at about 2 million barrels per day. Production and hence income declined yet again in the early 1980s because of the high price of Libyan crude and because recession in the industrialized world reduced demand for oil from all sources.

Libya's Five-Year Economic and Social Transformation Plan (1976-80), announced in 1975, was programmed to pump US$20 billion into the development of a broad range of economic activities that would continue to provide income after Libya's petroleum reserves had been exhausted. Agriculture was slated to receive the largest share of aid in an effort to make Libya self-sufficient in food and to help keep the rural population on the land. Industry, of which there was little before the revolution, also received a significant amount of funding in the first development plan as well as in the second, launched in 1981.

Libya continued to be plagued with a shortage of skilled labor, which had to be imported along with a broad range of consumer goods, both paid for with petroleum income. This same oil revenue, however, made possible a substantial improvement in the lives of virtually all Libyans. During the 1970s, the government succeeded in making major improvements in the general welfare of its citizens. By the 1980s Libyans enjoyed much improved housing and education, comprehensive social welfare services, and general standards of health that were among the highest in Africa.

Qadhafi became the foremost exponent of Arab unity in the 1970s. Although all Arab governments endorsed the idea in principle, most observed that conditions were not right for putting it into practice or that unity would come only at the end of a long process of historical evolution. But Qadhafi rejected these views. As he conceived it, Arab unity was not an ideal but a realistic goal. He agreed that achieving Arab unity was a process that required sequential and intermediate stages of development, but the challenge he posed to other Arab leaders was that the process had to begin somewhere. Qadhafi expressed his determination to make a contribution to the process and offered Libya as the leavening agent.

Throughout 1970 Qadhafi consulted with Egyptian and Sudanese leaders
about how to achieve some form of union. Nasser died in September 1970, but Egyptian participation in the unity talks continued under his successor, President Anwar as Sadat. It was the young Qadhafi, however, who moved to assume Nasser's mantle as the ideological leader of Arab nationalism.

At the request of its new head of state, Lieutenant General Hafiz al Assad, the unity talks were expanded to include Syria. After further meetings, Qadhafi, Sadat, and Assad simultaneously announced in April 1971 the formation of a federation of Libya, Egypt, and Syria. The three heads of state signed a draft constitution in August that was overwhelmingly approved in referenda in all three countries. Sadat was named the first president of a council of heads of state that was to be the governing body for the Federation of Arab Republics (FAR), which came into existence on paper on January 1, 1972. Broad plans were drawn up to provide for a full-fledged merger affecting the legal systems, laws, employment, armed forces, and foreign policies of all three countries. Agreement on specific measures, however, eluded the FAR leaders, and the federation never progressed beyond making symbolic gestures of unity, such as the adoption of a common flag.

For Qadhafi, the FAR was a step on the road to achieving his ultimate goal: the comprehensive union of the "Arab Nation." Although he remained the federation's most ardent backer, Qadhafi was never satisfied with the approach taken by his Egyptian and Syrian partners toward what he termed the "battle plan" for confrontation with Israel. Nonetheless, he initiated talks with Sadat on full political union between Egypt and Libya, which would merge the neighboring countries into a single state within the framework of the FAR.

At first glance, the proposed merger seemed like the mating of a whale with a minnow. Egypt's population was 34 million, Libya's under 2 million. But Libya's annual per capita income was fourteen times that of Egypt. Its fiscal reserves in 1972 were estimated at more than the equivalent of US$2.5 billion—at least ten times the amount held by Egypt.

Sadat pledged support for the project at the conclusion of a conference with Qadhafi in August 1972. Soon, however, real obstacles to the merger arose, including the serious personal disagreement that developed between the two leaders over a timetable for the union. Qadhafi called for immediate unification, the framing of a constitution to follow; Sadat insisted on step-by-step integration and thorough preparation of the instruments of union. During 1973 Qadhafi went so far as to offer to resign as Libyan head of state if his departure would placate Sadat, whose enthusiasm for the merger had waned conspicuously. Qadhafi also organized a "holy march" on Cairo by an estimated 30,000 Libyans to demonstrate Libyan support for the merger, but to no avail. The September 1, 1973, date that Sadat had set for final action to be taken on the merger passed without notice in Cairo, hardly a surprising development because many Egyptians as well as Libyans had come to oppose the project. Opposition stemmed from the historical
antipathy between Egyptians and Libyans and such factors as the incompatibility of the two political systems, with Egypt being considerably more democratic than Libya as well as more secular in orientation.

Qadhafi envisioned the combination of Libya's wealth and Egypt's manpower and military capacity as the key element for the success of the Arab struggle against Israel. For example, to further this success, Libyan aircraft were secretly transferred to the Egyptian air force and subsequently saw action in the October 1973 War. It was that war with Israel, however, that proved to be the watershed in relations between the two Arab states. The joint Egyptian-Syrian operation came as a surprise to Qadhafi, who had been excluded from its planning by Sadat and Assad. The Libyan leader castigated his erstwhile FAR partners for wasting resources in fighting a war for limited objectives, and he was appalled by Sadat's agreement to a cease-fire after the successful Israeli counteroffensive. He accused the Egyptian leader of cowardice and of purposely sabotaging the federation. In response, Sadat revealed that he had intervened in 1973 to prevent a planned Libyan submarine attack on the S.S. Queen Elizabeth II while the British liner was carrying a Jewish tourist group in the Mediterranean. Thereafter, relations between the two leaders degenerated into a series of charges and countercharges that effectively ended any talk of merger.

In the mid-1970s, Qadhafi undertook a major armaments program paid for by the higher post-1973 oil revenues. He wished to play a major role in Middle East affairs based on military strength and increasing uneasiness with Sadat's policies. To acquire sophisticated weapons, Qadhafi turned to the Soviet Union, with which his relations grew closer as Sadat leaned more and more toward a peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli problem. Mutual suspicion between Sadat and Qadhafi, plus Egyptian charges of Libyan subversion, led to a brief but sharp shooting war along their common frontier in July 1977. Egyptian forces advanced a short distance into Libya before Algerian mediation ended the fighting. The conflict occasioned the departure from Libya of thousands of Egyptians employed in the petroleum industry, agriculture, commerce, education, and the bureaucracy, causing disruption of Libyan economic activities and public services.

The major break between Egypt and Libya came over Sadat's journey to Jerusalem the following November and the conclusion of a separate peace with Israel in September 1978. Not only were diplomatic relations between Egypt and Libya broken, but Libya played a leading role in organizing the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front in December 1977. The front's members were Libya, Syria, Algeria, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), all of whom bitterly opposed Sadat's peace initiatives. Qadhafi favored the isolation of Egypt as punishment, because he adamantly rejected a peaceful solution with Israel. He subsequently toned down his more extreme rhetoric in the interest of forging unity among Arab states in opposing the policies of President
Sadat and his successor, Husni Mubarak.

Qadhafi's quest for unity on his western border was similarly fruitless. A proposed union with Tunisia in 1974 was immediately repudiated by Habib Bourguiba, Tunisia's president. This incident, together with Tunisian accusations of Libyan subversion and a quarrel over demarcation of the continental shelf with its oil fields, thoroughly soured relations. Then in early 1980 a group of disgruntled Tunisians staged an abortive revolt at Gafsa in central Tunisia, disguised as a cross-border attack from Algeria. Bourguiba accused Qadhafi of engineering the incident and suspended diplomatic relations with Tripoli. Qadhafi denied involvement, but relations between Tripoli and Tunis remained at low ebb.

Having failed to achieve union with Egypt and Tunisia, Qadhafi turned once again to Syria. In September 1980, Assad agreed to yet another merger with Libya. This attempt at a unified state came at a time when both countries were diplomatically isolated. As part of the agreement, Libya undertook to pay a debt of US$1 billion that Syria owed the Soviet Union for weapons.

Ironically, this successful union with Syria confounded Qadhafi's pan-Arab ambitions. When war broke out between Iran and Iraq in September 1980, Libya and Syria were the only Arab states to give unqualified support to non-Arab Iran. At the same time, the war brought a break in Libya's relations with Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Yet another obstacle arose in December 1981 when Qadhafi had to contend with the first of two airline hijackings carried out by Lebanese Shias seeking information about their leader, Imam Musa Sadr, who had disappeared while on a visit to Libya in 1978. Both hijackings ended without release of or news about Musa Sadr, whose disappearance badly tarnished Libya's image among Shias in Lebanon, Iran, and elsewhere.

Qadhafi's approach to sub-Saharan Africa revolved around several basic concerns: the attempt to increase Libyan influence in Muslim or partly Muslim states, promotion of Islamic unity, and support, often uncritical, for African liberation movements. One of Qadhafi's frequently stated goals was the creation of a Saharan Islamic state, but critics accused him of being more interested in empire than in fostering and promoting Islam. The aforementioned objectives governed his relations with African states, and nowhere more so than in neighboring Chad and Sudan.

Libya had been deeply involved in Chad since the early 1970s. Reasons for this involvement included tribal and religious affinities between northern Chad and southern Libya and a contested common border dating back to the colonial period. In 1973 Libya occupied the Aouzou Strip. The territory, which allegedly contains significant deposits of
uranium and other minerals, gave the Libyans a solid foothold in Chad. From his Aouzou Strip base Qadhafi also gave moral and material aid to northern dissidents in the prolonged Chadian civil war. In the late 1970s, these dissidents were led Goukouni Oueddei, the leader of the Tebu.

After failure in the 1970s of mediation efforts in which Libya was deeply involved, Qadhafi provided equipment and troops to Goukouni that enabled him to capture N'Djamena, Chad's capital, in December 1980. In January the two leaders called for a merger of their countries, but the outcry among a number of West African states and from France, the former Chadian colonial power, was so great that the proposal was dropped. Even within Goukouni's own forces, there was considerable opposition to Libya's presence and tactics. Under persistent international pressure, Libya's estimated 10,000 to 15,000 troops withdrew to the Aouzou Strip in November 1981. Opposition forces under Hissein Habré subsequently drove Goukouni back north, leaving Habré in control of N'Djamena, from which he pressed unsuccessfully for Libya's withdrawal from Aouzou.

During the 1970s, relations between Libya and Sudan went from bad to worse. At the beginning of the decade, Qadhafi aided Sudanese President Jaafar an Numayri against leftist plotters. But by the mid-1970s, relations had turned hostile after Numayri accused Libya of subversion and of responsibility for several coup attempts. Thereafter, Sudan belonged to the camp of Qadhafi's sworn opponents. In 1980 Numayri condemned the Libyan invasion of Chad, being especially fearful of Libyan meddling in Sudan's troubled border province of Darfur. In early 1981, Numayri called for Libya's expulsion from the Arab League and for a joint effort to overthrow or kill Qadhafi. A few months later, he ordered Libyan diplomats to leave Khartoum in the wake of a bombing of the Chadian embassy linked to Libyan instigation.

Libyan intervention in Uganda in the 1970s constituted a special case. There Qadhafi was interested less in unity than in bolstering a friendly Islamic regime against both internal and external opposition. Beginning in 1972, Qadhafi gave financial and military backing to Idi Amin Dada in return for Amin's disavowal of Uganda's previously close relationship with Israel. Thereafter, Qadhafi continued to back Amin, despite the wide condemnation of Amin's brutal rule. In late 1978 and early 1979, when combined Tanzanian-Ugandan forces drove Amin from power, Qadhafi unsuccessfully airlifted troops and supplies in Amin's defense, and he granted the Ugandan leader temporary asylum in Tripoli.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Libya was widely suspected of financing international terrorist activities and political subversion around the world. Recruits from various national liberation movements reportedly received training in Libya, and Libyan financing of Palestinian activities against Israel was openly acknowledged. There were also allegations of
Libyan assistance to such diverse groups as Lebanese leftists, the Irish Republican Army, Muslim rebels in the Philippines, and left-wing extremists in Europe and Japan. Some observers thought support was more verbal than material. However, in 1981 the GPC declared Libyan support of national liberation movements a matter of principle, an act that lent credence to charges of support for terrorism.

Support for international terrorism was a major issue in Libya's relations with the United States and Western Europe. The United States, in particular, viewed Libya's diplomatic and material support for what Tripoli called "liberation movements" as aid and comfort to international terrorists. In general, after the early 1970s relations between the two countries went from bad to worse, even while the United States continued to import Libyan crude.

Qadhafi opposed United States diplomatic initiatives and military presence in the Middle East. As a protest against Washington's policies in Iran, the United States embassy in Tripoli was stormed and burned in December 1979. In the late 1970s, Washington blocked delivery to Libya of equipment judged of potential military value and in May 1981 ordered Libyan diplomatic personnel to leave the United States to prevent assassination of anti-Qadhafi Libyan dissidents. The most serious incident occurred in August 1981 when United States jets shot down two Libyan jet fighters during naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra. That same month, Libya signed an economic and political agreement with Ethiopia and South Yemen, the so-called Tripartite Agreement, aimed at countering Western, and primarily American, interests in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. After a series of joint consultations, however, the pact became largely a dead letter.

Libya's income from oil came from sales to Western Europe as well as to the United States, and to ensure a steady supply of oil most European nations tried to remain on reasonable terms with their Libyan supplier. Some protests arose over the wave of political assassinations of Libyan exiles in Europe in 1980, but only Britain with its independent supply of oil took a strong stand on the issue. Qadhafi's call that same year for compensation from Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), and Italy for destruction of Libyan property in World War II brought no response, even when the Libyan leader threatened to seize property if adequate compensation were not negotiated.

By the early 1980s, Libya was a country embroiled in controversy. Libyan ventures in Chad and elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East had earned a good deal of opprobrium for Qadhafi, who often pursued his goal of Arab and Islamic unity and extended Libyan influence at what seemed any price. Indeed, suspicion if not hostility were the usual response to Qadhafi's initiatives in the Arab and Western world.

Domestically, the government had attempted to ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth, a step that pleased many but by no means all of its citizens. A new political system with new institutions was also in place.
with the aim of involving as many citizens as possible in governing themselves. But overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities had led to confusion, and there were questions as to the viability of the committee system of government. A sizable number of Libyans seemed uninterested in political participation, while others had gone into opposition, active or passive, at home and abroad. The country's oil revenues had been channeled into agricultural and industrial projects that the regime hoped would provide employment and lessen dependence upon imports and foreign labor. Even in these areas, the results were less promising than had been expected, and falling oil prices diminished the financial resources that could be devoted to continued economic and foreign policy initiatives.

The decline in oil revenues and consequent economic slowdown, the continued reliance upon non-Libyan expertise, and the generally unfavorable state of foreign relations and persistent dissidence in the military and society at large posed grave problems for the Qadhafi regime in the early 1980s.

With an area of 1,760,000 square kilometers and a Mediterranean coastline of nearly 1,800 kilometers, Libya is fourth in size among the countries of Africa and fifteenth among the countries of the world. Although the oil discoveries of the 1960s have brought it immense petroleum wealth, at the time of its independence it was an extremely poor desert state whose only important physical asset appeared to be its strategic location at the midpoint of Africa's northern rim. It lay within easy reach of the major European nations and linked the Arab countries of North Africa with those of the Middle East, facts that throughout history had made its urban centers bustling crossroads rather than isolated backwaters without external social influences. Consequently, an immense social gap developed between the cities, cosmopolitan and peopled largely by foreigners, and the desert hinterland, where tribal chieftains ruled in isolation and where social change was minimal.

The Mediterranean coast and the Sahara Desert are the country's most prominent natural features. There are several highlands but no true mountain ranges except in the largely empty southern desert near the Chadian border, where the Tibesti Massif rises to over 2,200 meters. A relatively narrow coastal strip and highland steppes immediately south of it are the most productive agricultural regions. Still farther south a pastoral zone of sparse grassland gives way to the vast Sahara Desert, a barren wasteland of rocky plateaus and sand. It supports minimal human habitation, and agriculture is possible only in a few scattered oases.

Between the productive lowland agricultural zones lies the Gulf of Sidra, where along the coast a stretch of 500 kilometers of wasteland desert extends northward to the sea. This barren zone, known as the Sirtica, has great historical significance. To its west, the area known as Tripolitania
has characteristics and a history similar to those of nearby Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. It is considered with these states to constitute a supranational region called the Maghrib. To the east, the area known historically as Cyrenaica has been closely associated with the Arab states of the Middle East. In this sense, the Sirtica marks the dividing point between the Maghrib and the Mashriq.

Along the shore of Tripolitania for more than 300 kilometers, coastal oases alternate with sandy areas and lagoons. Inland from these lies the Jifarah Plain, a triangular area of some 15,000 square kilometers. About 120 kilometers inland the plain terminates in an escarpment that rises to form the Jabal (mountain) Nafusah, a plateau with elevations of up to 1,000 meters.

In Cyrenaica there are fewer coastal oases, and the Marj Plain--the lowland area corresponding to the Jifarah Plain of Tripolitania--covers a much smaller area. The lowlands form a crescent about 210 kilometers long between Benghazi and Darnah and extend inland a maximum of 50 kilometers. Elsewhere along the Cyrenaican coast, the precipice of an arid plateau reaches to the sea. Behind the Marj Plain, the terrain rises abruptly to form Jabal al Akhdar (Green Mountain), so called because of its leafy cover of pine, juniper, cypress, and wild olive. It is a limestone plateau with maximum altitudes of about 900 meters. From Jabal al Akhdar, Cyrenaica extends southward across a barren grazing belt that gives way to the Sahara Desert, which extends still farther southwest across the Chad frontier. Unlike Cyrenaica, Tripolitania does not extend southward into the desert. The southwestern desert, known as Fezzan, was administered separately during both the Italian regime and the federal period of the Libyan monarchy. In 1969 the revolutionary government officially changed the regional designation of Tripolitania to Western Libya, of Cyrenaica to Eastern Libya, and of Fezzan to Southern Libya; however, the old names were intimately associated with the history of the area, and during the 1970s they continued to be used frequently. Cyrenaica comprises 51 percent, Fezzan 33 percent, and Tripolitania 16 percent of the country's area.

Before Libya achieved independence, its name was seldom used other than as a somewhat imprecise geographical expression. The people preferred to be referred to as natives of one of the three constituent regions. The separateness of the regions is much more than simply geographical and political, for they have evolved largely as different socioeconomic entities--each with a culture, social structure, and values different from the others. Cyrenaica became Arabized at a somewhat earlier date than Tripolitania, and beduin tribes dominated it. The residual strain of the indigenous Berber inhabitants, however, still remains in Tripolitania. Fezzan has remained a kind of North African outback, its oases peopled largely by minority ethnic groups.

The border between Tripolitania and Tunisia is subject to countless crossings by legal and illegal migrants. No natural frontier marks the border, and the ethnic composition, language, value systems, and traditions of the two peoples are nearly identical. The Cyrenaica region
is contiguous with Egypt, and here, too, the border is not naturally defined; illegal as well as legal crossings are frequent. In contrast, Fezzan's borders with Algeria, Niger, and Chad are seldom crossed because of the almost total emptiness of the desert countryside.

Other factors, too, such as the traditional forms of land tenure, have varied in the different regions. In the 1980s their degrees of separateness was still sufficiently pronounced to represent a significant obstacle to efforts toward achieving a fully unified Libya.

Within Libya as many as five different climatic zones have been recognized, but the dominant climatic influences are Mediterranean and Saharan. In most of the coastal lowland, the climate is Mediterranean, with warm summers and mild winters. Rainfall is scanty, and the dry climate results in a year-round 98-percent visibility. The weather is cooler in the highlands, and frosts occur at maximum elevations. In the desert interior the climate has very hot summers and extreme diurnal temperature ranges.

Less than 2 percent of the national territory receives enough rainfall for settled agriculture, the heaviest precipitation occurring in the Jabal al Akhdar zone of Cyrenaica, where annual rainfall of 400 to 600 millimeters is recorded. All other areas of the country receive less than 400 millimeters, and in the Sahara 50 millimeters or less occurs. Rainfall is often erratic, and a pronounced drought may extend over two seasons. For example, epic floods in 1945 left Tripoli under water for several days, but two years later an unprecedentedly severe drought caused the loss of thousands of head of cattle.

Deficiency in rainfall is reflected in an absence of permanent rivers or streams, and the approximately twenty perennial lakes are brackish or salty. In 1987 these circumstances severely limited the country's agricultural potential as a basis for the sound and varied economy Qadhai sought to establish. The allocation of limited water is considered of sufficient importance to warrant the existence of the Secretariat of Dams and Water Resources, and damaging a source of water can be penalized by a heavy fine or imprisonment.

The government has constructed a network of dams in wadis, dry watercourses that become torrents after heavy rains. These dams are used both as water reservoirs and for flood and erosion control. The wadis are heavily settled because soil in their bottoms is often suitable for agriculture, and the high water table in their vicinity makes them logical locations for digging wells. In many wadis, however, the water table is declining at an alarming rate, particularly in areas of intensive agriculture and near urban centers. The government has expressed concern over this problem and because of it has diverted water development projects, particularly around Tripoli, to localities where the
demand on underground water resources is less intense. It has also undertaken extensive reforestation projects.

There are also numerous springs, those best suited for future development occurring along the scarp faces of the Jabal Nafusah and the Jabal al Akhdar. The most talked-about of the water resources, however, are the great subterranean aquifers of the desert. The best known of these lies beneath Al Kufrah Oasis in southeastern Cyrenaica, but an aquifer with even greater reputed capacity is located near the oasis community of Sabha in the southwestern desert. In the late 1970s, wells were drilled at Al Kufrah and at Sabha as part of a major agricultural development effort. An even larger undertaking is the so-called Great Man-Made River, initiated in 1984. It is intended to tap the tremendous aquifers of the Al Kufrah, Sarir, and Sabha oases and to carry the resulting water to the Mediterranean coast for use in irrigation and industrial projects.

LIBYAN SOCIETY IN the late 1980s was in a state of transition from one set of structures and values to another. For nearly two decades the country's leader, Muammar al Qadhafi, had sought to transform Libya from an underdeveloped backwater into a modern socialist state compatible with the dictates of the Quran and the heritage of Islam. The regime's policies and goals often aroused controversy as the country moved away from the Libyan-Arab mold of the past in which heredity and patronage determined social distinction and toward the new egalitarian society that was the Qadhafi regime's ideal.

The changes the society was undergoing were made possible in large measure by petroleum wealth, which had converted the country from one of the world's poorest at the time of independence in 1951 to one of the most prosperous. By the 1980s, most Libyans enjoyed educational opportunities, health care, and housing that were among the best in Africa and the Middle East. Responsibility for the care of the old and the needy had been largely shifted from the extended family to a comprehensive system of social security. Education and medical care were free, and when necessary the state subsidized housing and other necessities. Life expectancy, perhaps the ultimate measure of living standards, had lengthened by ten years since 1960, and social mobility was much improved.

In 1984 the population reached 3.6 million and was growing at about 4 percent a year, one of the highest rates in the world. Unlike its neighbors, the Libyan government welcomed this rate of growth, which it hoped would eventually remedy the country's shortage of labor. The population was overwhelmingly concentrated along the Mediterranean coast, much of it around Benghazi and Tripoli. Villagers and rural tribesmembers continued to migrate to cities and towns, seeking better-paying jobs in industry or in the service sector of the modern economy.
The number of jobs far exceeded the number of qualified Libyans; consequently, the population included at least 260,000 expatriate workers who were essential for the functioning of the economy.

Roughly one-half of the population was under the age of fifteen. The prospects for future employment and a fruitful life were such that Libyan youth for the most part were not the discontented lot found elsewhere in North Africa.

The status of women continued to undergo modification at the behest of the revolution's leaders. Especially in urban areas, women in ever-greater numbers were entering schools and the universities and finding employment in professions newly opened to them. Although tradition remained quite strong, the role of women was in the midst of what was for Libya a remarkable transformation.

In spite of the gains of the revolution, however, Libyan society was deeply divided. Little sense of national unity, identity, or purpose had developed, and the old ethnic and geographic divisions among Cyrenaica, Fezzan, and Tripolitania were still very evident. Alienation from the Qadhafi regime and its policies was widespread, a sentiment reinforced by shortages of consumer goods and by persistent exhortations to participate in governing the country. Whole segments of the populace were so disaffected that they either did not participate or did so only minimally, retreating into apathy and private matters. Qadhafi's campaign to discredit Islamic authorities and creeds and to enlist young women in the armed forces similarly offended Libyan sensitivities.

Most foreign observers believed that the regime faced a difficult task in convincing the majority of Libyans of the need for further social change. In the 1980s, Libyan society remained profoundly conservative and resistant to the impulses for change that emanated from its leaders. The wisdom of current social policies was being questioned, and it was obvious that many Libyans were not enthusiastic about the course of action that the revolutionary government had laid out.

As of 1987, the most recent census was that taken in July 1984, but the only available data showed a provisional population figure of 3.637 million inhabitants—one of the smallest totals on the African continent. Of these, an estimated 1.950 million were men, and 1.687 million women. Having slightly more men than women in the population was characteristic of developing countries such as Libya where health practices and sanitation were fast improving but where female mortality relating to childbirth and favoritism toward male over female children caused a slight skewing of the population profile. In addition, underreporting of females is fairly common in many Muslim societies.
The 1984 population total was an increase from the 2.29 million reported in 1973 and 1.54 million in 1964. Included in the census were at least 260,000 expatriate workers, but the total number of foreigners in Libya in 1984 was unavailable. This uncertainty was in keeping with a general lack of reliable, current, social statistics for Libya in the 1980s, in marked contrast with the situation a decade earlier.

The population was exceptionally young and was growing at a rapid pace. Estimates placed those under the age of fifteen at up to half the total population. Based on results of the 1984 census, the United Nations (UN) placed the annual rate of increase for the 1980-84 period at an extremely high 4.5 percent, but the Central Bank of Libya placed the figure at 3.9 percent annually for nationals only. Official sources put the average annual growth rate for the 1970-86 period at 4 percent, a figure that agreed with World Bank data; the bank projected that this rate would prevail until the year 2000, when Libya’s population would total 6 million.

This high rate of population increase reflected an official policy of fostering rapid growth to meet labor needs and to fuel economic development. It was also well above comparable rates in other Maghribi states, which had instituted family planning programs to contain their burgeoning numbers. Libya had no such national program. On the contrary, the government offered incentives to encourage births and had improved health facilities to ensure infant survivability. Libyan population policy thus emphasized growth over restraint, large families over small ones, and an ever-expanding population--luxuries Libya felt it could afford, given the vastness of its wealth in petroleum and area.

According to UN estimates for the years 1980-85, life expectancy was fifty-six years for men and fifty-nine years for women, a gain of more than ten years for each sex since 1960. The crude birth rate was 46 per 1,000, down 7 percent since 1965, while the crude death rate was 11 per 1,000, a decline of 40 percent over 20 years. The infant mortality rate had similarly declined from 140 deaths per 1,000 in 1965 to 92 in 1985, still high by Western standards but not by those of North Africa.

The population was by no means distributed evenly across the country. About 65 percent resided in Tripolitania, 30 percent in Cyrenaica, and 5 percent in Fezzan, a breakdown that had not changed appreciably for at least 30 years. Within the two northern geographic regions, the population was overwhelmingly concentrated along the Mediterranean littoral. Along the coast, the density was estimated at more than fifty inhabitants per square kilometer, whereas it fell to less than one per square kilometer in the interior. The average for the country as a whole was usually placed at two.

In the 1980s, Libya was still predominantly a rural country, even though a large percentage of its people were concentrated in the cities and nearby intensively cultivated agricultural zones of the coastal plains. Under the impact of heavy and sustained country-to-town migration, the urban sector continued to grow rapidly, averaging 8 percent annually in
the early 1980s. Reliable assessments held the country to be about 40 percent urban as compared with a 1964 figure of 27 percent. Some sources, such as the World Bank, placed the rate of urbanization at more than 60 percent, but this figure was probably based on 1973 census data that reflected a radical change in the definition of urban population rather than an unprecedented surge of rural inhabitants into cities and towns. In spite of sizable internal migration into urban centers, particularly Benghazi and Tripoli, Libya remained less urbanized than almost any other Arab country. The government was concerned about this continual drain from the countryside. Since the late 1970s, it had sponsored a number of farming schemes in the desert, designed in part to encourage rural families to remain on the land rather than to migrate to more densely populated areas.

In the early 1980s, the urban concentrations of Tripoli and Benghazi dominated the country. These two cities and the neighboring coastal regions contained more than 90 percent of Libya's population and nearly all of its urban centers, but they occupied less than 10 percent of the land area. Several factors accounted for their dominance, such as higher rates of fertility, declining death rates because of improved health and sanitation measures, and long-term internal migration.

As the capital of the country, Tripoli was the larger and more important of the two cities. Greater Tripoli was composed of six municipalities that stretched nearly 100 kilometers along the coast and about 50 inland. At the heart of this urban complex was the city of Tripoli, the 1984 population of which was 990,000 and which contained several distinct zones. The medina was the oldest quarter, many of its buildings dating to the Ottoman era. Here a traditionally structured Islamic society composed of artisans, religious scholars and leaders, shopkeepers, and merchants had survived into the mid-twentieth century. The manufacture of traditional handicrafts, such as carpets, leather goods, copper ware, and pottery, was centered in the medina.

The Italian city, constructed between 1911 and 1951 beyond the medina, was designed for commercial and administrative purposes. It featured wide avenues, piazzas, multistoried buildings, parks, and residential areas where Italian colonials once lived. The Libyan-built modern sector reflected the needs of government, the impact of large-scale internal migration, new industrialization, and oil income. Independence brought rapid rural-to-urban migration as a result of employment opportunities in construction, transportation, and municipal services, especially after the discovery of oil. This period also brought new government facilities, apartment buildings, and the first public housing projects as well as such industries as food-processing, textiles, and oil refining.

Metropolitan Tripoli sprawled in an arc around the harbor and medina. In addition to its political, commercial, and residential structures and functions, the city was a seat of learning and scholarship centered in religious seminaries, technical colleges, and a university. Planners hoped to channel future growth east and west along the coast and to promote
expansion of surrounding towns in an effort to reduce urban density and to preserve contiguous agricultural zones. They also envisaged revitalization of the medina as they strove to preserve the city's architectural and cultural heritage in the midst of twentieth-century urbanization.

As a consequence of its small population and work force, Libya has had to import a large number of foreign workers. Expatriate workers, most of them from nearby Arab countries, flowed into Libya after the discovery of oil. There were about 17,000 of them in 1964, but the total had risen to 64,000 by 1971 and to 223,000 in 1975, when foreign workers made up almost 33 percent of the labor force. The official number of foreign workers in Libya in 1980 was 280,000, but private researchers argued persuasively that the true number was more than 500,000 because of underreporting and illegal entry.

The most acute demand was for managerial and professional personnel. A large percentage of the expatriates were unskilled laborers, who were widely distributed throughout the economy. On paper, there was ample legislation to ensure that foreigners were given employment only where qualified Libyans could not be found. But the demand for labor of all kinds was such that the availability of aliens made it possible for Libyans to select the choice positions for themselves and leave the less desirable ones to foreigners.

In 1980 nonnationals were found mainly in construction work, where they numbered almost 130,000 or 46 percent of those employed in that industry, according to official statistics. Their numbers in such work were expected to decline after the mid-1980s, at the same time that ever-larger numbers of foreigners were expected to fill jobs in manufacturing, where they constituted more than 8 percent of the 1980 labor force. Significant numbers of expatriates were found in agriculture (8 percent) and education (10 percent) as well. Few were employed in the petroleum sector, however, only 3,000 or 1 percent of all foreign workers in 1980.

In 1983 there were more than 560,000 foreigners resident in Libya, about 18 percent of the total population, according to the Secretariat of Planning. By far the most numerous were Egyptians (174,000) and Tunisians (73,600); the largest Western groups were Italians (14,900) and British (10,700). During 1984, however, a large portion of the foreign work force departed as a result of restrictions on repatriation of earnings. In 1985, for reasons that appeared more political than economic, Libya expelled tens of thousands of workers, including 20,000 Egyptians, 32,000 Tunisians, and several thousand from Mali and Niger. This exodus continued the following year when some 25,000 Moroccans were forced to depart.

The number of resident foreigners thus declined drastically in the mid-1980s. The exact dimensions of the decline as well as its impact upon the country, however, remained unclear. Minimum estimates of the number of nonnationals still in Libya in 1987 ranged upward of 200,000, a reasonable figure given Libya's dependence upon imported labor for
essential skills and services.

Arabs
Berbers
Tuareg
Black Africans
Languages of Libya

For more recent population estimates, see Facts about Libya.

The successive waves of Arabs who arrived beginning in the seventh century imposed Islam and the Arabic language along with their political domination. Conversion to Islam was largely complete by 1300, but Arabic replaced the indigenous Berber dialects more slowly. Initially, many Berbers fled into the desert, resisting Islam and viewing it as a urban religion. In the eleventh century, however, tribes of the beduin Bani Hilal and Bani Salim invaded first Cyrenaica and later Tripolitania and were generally effective in imposing their Islamic faith and nomadic way of life. This beduin influx disrupted existing settlements and living patterns; in many areas tribal life and organization were introduced or strengthened. A further influx of Arabic-speaking peoples occurred in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries as a result of the upheavals accompanying the fall to the Christians of the last Muslim kingdom in Spain.

It is estimated that the total number of Arabs who arrived in North Africa during the first two migrations did not exceed 700,000 and that in the twelfth-century population of 6 or 7 million they did not constitute more than 10 percent of the total. Arab blood later received some reinforcement from Spain, but throughout North Africa Berber background heavily outweighed Arab origin. Arabization of the Berbers advanced more rapidly and completely in Libya than elsewhere in the Maghrib and by the mid-twentieth century relatively few Berber speakers remained. By contrast, in Morocco and Algeria, and to a lesser extent in Tunisia, Berbers who had yet to become Arabized continued to form substantial ethnic minorities.

In the countryside traditional Arab life, including customary dress, was still predominant at the time of Libyan independence in 1951. The subsequent discovery of petroleum and the new wealth that resulted, the continuing urban migration, and the sometimes extreme social changes of the revolutionary era, however, have made progressive inroads in traditional ways. For example, in the cities, already to some extent Europeanized at the time of the revolution in 1969, men and some younger women frequently wore Western clothing, but older women still dressed in the customary manner.

Among the beduin tribes of the desert, seasonal shifts to new grazing
lands in pursuit of rainfall and grass growth remained widespread. Some tribes were seminomadic, following their herds in summer but living in settled communities during the winter. Most of the rural population was sedentary, living in nuclear farm villages. But often the nomadic and the sedentary were mixed, some members of a clan or family residing in a village while younger members of the same group followed their flocks on a seasonal basis.

The distinction between individual tribes was at least as significant as the distinction between Arab and non-Arab. Tracing their descent to ascribed common ancestors, various tribal groups have formed kinship and quasi-political units bound by loyalties that override all others. Although tribal ties remained important in some areas, the revolutionary government had taken various measures to discourage the nomadic way of life that was basic to tribal existence, and by the 1980s it appeared that tribal life was fast becoming a thing of the past.

Arab influence permeates the culture, among both the common people and the social, political, economic, and intellectual elite. The cultural impact of the Italian colonial regime was superficial, and Libya—unlike other North African countries, with their legacy of French cultural domination—suffered no conflict of cultural identity. As a rule, those few Libyans achieving higher education obtained it not in Europe but in neighboring Arab countries.

Part of what was once the dominant ethnic group throughout North Africa, the Berbers of Libya today live principally in remote mountain areas or in desert localities where successive waves of Arab migration failed to reach or to which they retreated to escape the invaders. In the 1980s Berbers, or native speakers of Berber dialects, constituted about 5 percent, or 135,000, of the total population, although a substantially larger proportion is bilingual in Arabic and Berber. Berber place-names are still common in some areas where Berber is no longer spoken. The language survives most notably in the Jabal Nafusah highlands of Tripolitania and in the Cyrenaican town of Awjilah. In the latter, the customs of seclusion and concealment of women have been largely responsible for the persistence of the Berber tongue. Because it is used largely in public life, most men have acquired Arabic, but it has become a functional language for only a handful of modernized young women.

By and large, cultural and linguistic, rather than physical, distinctions separate Berber from Arab. The touchstone of Berberhood is the use of the Berber language. A continuum of related but not always mutually intelligible dialects, Berber is a member of the Afro-Asiatic language family. It is distantly related to Arabic, but unlike Arabic it has not developed a written form and as a consequence has no written literature.

Unlike the Arabs, who see themselves as a single nation, Berbers do not
conceive of a united Berberdom and have no name for themselves as a
people. The name *Berber* has been attributed to them by outsiders and is
thought to derive from *barbari*, the term the ancient Romans applied to
them. Berbers identify with their families, clans, and tribe. Only when
dealing with outsiders do they identify with other groupings such as the
Tuareg. Traditionally, Berbers recognized private property, and the poor
often worked the lands of the rich. Otherwise, they were remarkably
egalitarian. A majority of the surviving Berbers belong to the Khariji
sect of Islam, which emphasizes the equality of believers to a greater
extent than does the Maliki rite of Sunni Islam, which is followed by the
Arab population. A young Berber sometimes visits Tunisia or Algeria to
find a Khariji bride when none is available in his own community.

Most of the remaining Berbers live in Tripolitania, and many Arabs of
the region still show traces of their mixed Berber ancestry. Their
dwellings are clustered in groups made up of related families;
households consist of nuclear families, however, and the land is
individually held. Berber enclaves also are scattered along the coast and
in a few desert oases. The traditional Berber economy has struck a
balance between farming and pastoralism, the majority of the village or
tribe remaining in one place throughout the year while a minority
accompanies the flock on its circuit of seasonal pastures.

Berbers and Arabs in Libya live together in general amicability, but
quarrels between the two peoples occasionally erupted until recent times.
A short-lived Berber state existed in Cyrenaica during 1911 and 1912.
Elsewhere in the Maghrib during the 1980s, substantial Berber
minorities continued to play important economic and political roles. In
Libya their number was too small for them to enjoy corresponding
distinction as a group. Berber leaders, however, were in the forefront of
the independence movement in Tripolitania.

About 10,000 Tuareg nomads live scattered in the southwest desert,
wandering in the general vicinity of the oasis towns of Ghat and
Ghadamis. They claim close relationship with the much larger Tuareg
population in neighboring Algeria and with other Tuareg elsewhere in
the Sahara. Like other desert nomads, they formerly earned their
livelihood by raiding sedentary settlements, conducting long-distance
trading, and extracting protection fees from caravans and travelers. The
ending of the caravan trade and pacification of the desert, however, have
largely deprived this proud people of their livelihood and have reduced
many to penury.

The Tuareg language, Tamasheq, is a Berber dialect, and the Tuareg
adhere to a form of Sunni Islam that incorporates nonorthodox magical
elements. Men--but not women--wear veils, and the blue dye used in the
veils and clothing of nobles frequently transfers to the skin, causing the
Tuareg to be known as "blue men." Marriage is monogynous, and
Tuareg women enjoy high status; inheritance is through the female line, and as a general rule only women can read and write.

In southernmost Libya live about 2,600 Tebu, part of a larger grouping of around 215,000 Tebu in northern Chad, Niger, and Sudan. Their ethnic identity and cohesion are defined by language, not social organization or geography, although all Tebu share many cultural traits. Their language, Tebu, is a member of the Nilo-Saharan language family, not all dialects being mutually intelligible. The basic social unit is the nuclear family, organized into patrilineal clans. The Tebu economy is a combination of pastoralism, farming, and date cultivation. The Tebu are Muslim, their Islam being strongly molded by Sanusi proselytizing in the nineteenth century. Neighboring peoples view them as tough, solitary, desert and mountain people.

A significant number of sub-Saharan Africans live in desert and coastal communities, mixed with Arabs and Berbers. Most of them are descended from former slaves—the last slave caravan is said to have reached Fezzan in 1929—but some immigrated to Tripoli during World War II. In recent years, waves of migrant workers from Mali, Niger, Sudan, and other Sahelian countries have arrived. A majority work as farmers or sharecroppers in Fezzan, but some have migrated to urban centers, where they are occupied in a variety of jobs considered menial.

Another distinct but numerically small group of blacks, the harathin (plowers, cultivators) have been in the Saharan oases for millennia. Their origins are obscure, but they appear to have been subservient to the Tuareg or other Libyan overlords for at least the last millennium. As with other blacks, their status has traditionally been quite low. In Libya as a whole, dark-skinned people are looked down upon, the degree of discrimination increasing with the darkness of the skin.

All but a small minority of the Libyan people are native Arabic-speakers and thus consider themselves to be Arabs. Arabic, a Semitic language, is the mother tongue of almost all peoples of North Africa and the Middle East. Three levels of the language are distinguishable: classical, the language of the Quran; modern standard, the form used in the present-day press; and the regional colloquial dialects. In Libya classical Arabic is used by religious leaders; modern standard Arabic appears in formal and written communication and sometimes in the schools. Many people learn Quranic quotations without being able to speak the classical language.

In classical Arabic, as in other Semitic scripts, the text is read from right to left, and only consonants are written. Vowel signs and other diacritical
marks appear sometimes in printed texts as aids to pronunciation. Modern standard is grammatically simpler than classical and includes numerous words unknown to the Quran.

The spoken dialects of Tripolitania and Fezzan belong to the Maghribi group, used throughout the Maghrib. They are mutually intelligible but differ considerably from dialects in the Middle East. Dialects of Cyrenaica resemble those of Egypt and the Middle East. Urban dialects differ somewhat from those of the hinterland, and in the southern part of the country some Sudanese influence exists.

Arabs find great beauty and style in their language. It is a keystone of Arab nationalism and a symbol of Arab creativity. Libya has played a leading part in the campaign to make Arabic an official language in the forums of the UN and other international organizations. Yet although Arabic has a richness of sound and a variety of vocabulary that make it a tongue for poets, its syntactic complexity makes it one of the world's most complex written languages. Its intricate vocabulary also is not well suited as a medium for technical and scientific expression. Even modern standard Arabic contains little in the way of a technical vocabulary, in part because many Arabs are purists about their language and resist the intrusion of foreign words.

These deficiencies of Arabic, coupled with a tradition in Arab schools of learning by rote methods, have seriously interfered with scientific and technical advancement. In Libya, as well as in the other Maghribi countries where a similar problem exists, educators reluctantly recognize that preparation of suitable Arabic vocabulary additions, textbooks, and syllabi are still a generation or more away. In the meantime, scientific and technical subjects in the Libyan universities are in large part taught by foreigners employing foreign languages.

Under the colonial regime, Italian was the language of instruction in schools, but only a scattering of Muslim children attended these institutions. As a consequence, the Italian language did not take root in Libya to the extent that French did elsewhere in North Africa. Nevertheless, the strong wave of nationalism accompanying the 1969 revolution found expression in a campaign designed to elevate the status of the Arabic language. An order was issued requiring that all street signs, shop window notices, signboards, and traffic tickets be written in Arabic. This element of Arabization reached its apogee in 1973, when a decree was passed requiring that passports of persons seeking to enter the country contain the regular personal information in Arabic, a requirement that was strictly enforced.

Despite the progress of Arabization during the 1970s, English occupied an increasingly important place as the second language of the country. It was taught from primary school onward, and in the universities numerous scientific, technical, and medical courses were conducted in English. A Tripoli shopkeeper or a hotel doorman was unlikely to speak the language, but business people were accustomed to corresponding in it. The government also issued at least some internal statistical
documents and other publications in a bilingual English-Arabic format. In 1986 Qadhafi announced a policy of eliminating the teaching of English in favor of instruction in Russian at all levels. Whether this policy would actually be carried out remained to be seen in 1987, but it seemed safe to assume that English would remain in wide use for the immediate future if not longer.

Well into the postindependence period, tradition and traditional values dominated social life. Established religious and tribal practices found expression in the policies and personal style of King Idris and his regime. The discovery of oil, however, released social forces that the traditional forms could not contain. In terms of both expectation and way of life, the old order was permanently disturbed.

The various pressures of the colonial period, independence, and the development of the oil industry did much to alter the bases of urban society and to dissolve the tribal and village social structure. In particular, as the cash economy spread into the countryside, rural people were lured out of their traditional groups and into the modern sector. Values, too, began to change under the impact of new prosperity and the arrival of large numbers of foreigners. Since 1969 the pace of change has greatly quickened. Yet, for all the new wealth from petroleum and despite relentless government-inspired efforts to remake Libyan society, the pace of social change was slow, and the country remained one of the most conservative in the Arab world.

To a great extent, the cities have been crucibles of social change in modern Libya. The Sanusi brotherhood drew its strength from the tribal system of the desert, and the cities were marginal. More recently, however, they have become centers of attraction, drawing people out of the tribal and village systems and to some extent dissolving the bonds that held these systems together.

Before the arrival of the Europeans in the 1920s, urban centers had been organized around specific areas referred to as quarters. A city was composed of several quarters, each consisting of a number of families who had lived in that place for several generations and had become bound by feelings of solidarity. Families of every economic standing resided in the same quarter; the wealthy and the notable assumed leadership. Each quarter had leaders who represented it before the city at large, and to a great extent the quarter formed a small subsociety functioning at an intimate level in a manner that made it in some respects similar to a country village.

Occupations had different levels of acceptability. Carpenters, barbers, smiths of all kinds, plumbers, butchers, and mechanics were held in varying degrees of low esteem, with these kinds of work frequently performed by minority-group members. The opprobrium that continued
to attach to the occupations even after independence, despite the good pay frequently obtainable, has been attributed to the fact that such jobs did not originate in the pastoral and agrarian life that was the heritage of most of the population.

The arrival of the Europeans disturbed the traditional equilibrium of urban life. Unaccustomed to the ways of life appropriate to traditional housing, the newcomers built new cities along European lines, with wide streets, private lawns, and separate houses. As growing numbers of Libyans began to copy Europeans in dress and habits and to use European mass-produced products, local artisans were driven into reduced circumstances or out of business. European-style housing became popular among the well-to-do, and the old quarters gradually became neighborhoods of the poor.

Urban migration, which began under the Italians, resulted in an infusion of progressively larger numbers of workers and laid the basis for the modern working class. The attractions of city life, especially for the young and educated, were not exclusively material. Of equal importance was the generally more stimulating urban environment, particularly the opportunity to enjoy a wider range of social, recreational, cultural, and educational experiences.

As urban migration continued to accelerate, housing shortages destroyed what was left of quarter solidarity. The quarters were flooded with migrants, and old family residences became tenements. At the same time, squatter slums began to envelop the towns, housing those the town centers could not accommodate. In place of the old divisions based primarily on family background, income became the basic determinant of differentiation between residential neighborhoods.

Italian hegemony altered the bases of social distinction somewhat, but the change was superficial and transitory; unlike the other Maghribi countries, Libya did not receive a heavy infusion of European culture. As a result, the Libyan urban elite did not suffer the same cultural estrangement from the mass of the people that occurred elsewhere in North Africa. At the end of the colonial period, vestiges of Italian influence dropped quickly, and Arab Muslim culture began to reassert itself.

Before independence rural Libyans looked upon their tribal, village, and family leaders as the true sources of authority, and, in this sense, as their social elite. Appointments to government positions were largely political matters, and most permanent government jobs were allocated through patronage. Local governments were controlled largely by traditional tribal leaders who were able to dispense patronage and thus to perpetuate their influence in the changing circumstances that attended the discovery of oil.

The basic social units were the extended family, clan, and tribe. All three were the primary economic, educational, and welfare-providing units of their members. Individuals were expected to subordinate themselves and
their interests to those units and to obey the demands they made. The family was the most important focus of attention and loyalty and source of security, followed by the tribe. In most cases, the most powerful family of a clan provided tribal leadership and determined the reputation and power of the tribe.

Various criteria were used to evaluate individuals as well as families in the competition for preeminence. Lineage, wealth, and piety were among the most prominent. Throughout Libya's history, and especially during the period of the monarchy, family prominence and religious leadership became closely intertwined. Indeed, religious leadership tended to reside within selected family groupings throughout the country and to be passed successively from generation to generation. By the 1960s, local elites were still composed of individuals or families who owed their status to these same criteria. Local elites retained their position and legitimacy well into the mid-1970s, by which time the revolutionary government had attempted to dislodge them, often without success.

Rural social structures were tribally based, with the nomadic and seminomadic tribesmen organized into highly segmented units, as exemplified by the Sanusi of Cyrenaica. Originally, tribe members had been nomads, some of the beduin tracing their origins to the Arabian Peninsula. Pride in tribal membership remained strong, despite the fact that many nomads had become sedentary. At the same time, tribally based social organization, values, and world view raised formidable obstacles to the creation of a modern nation-state, because there were virtually no integrative or unifying institutions or social customs on the national level.

In the mid-1970s, the nomads and seminomads who made up most of the effective tribal population were rapidly dwindling in numbers. Tent dwellers numbered an estimated 200,000 in 1973, less than 10 percent of the population, as compared with about 320,000 nomads in 1964. Most of them lived in the extreme north of the country.

By this time, the revolutionary government had come to look upon tribal organization and values as antithetical to its policies. Even Qadhafi, despite his beduin roots, viewed tribes as anachronistic and as obstacles to modernization. Consequently, the government sought to break the links between the rural population and its traditional leaders by focusing attention on a new elite--the modernizers who represented the new leadership. The countryside was divided into zones that crossed old tribal boundaries, combining different tribes in a common zone and splitting tribes in a manner that weakened traditional institutions and the force of local kinship. The ancient ascriptive qualifications for leadership--lineage, piety, wealth--gave way to competence and education as determined by formal examination.

Tribal leaders, however, scoffed at efforts encouraging members to drop tribal affiliations, and pride in tribal lineage remained strong. This was remarkable in light of the fact that many tribes had long ago shed their beduin trappings and had become agrarian villagers. In effect, the
government had brought about the abolition of the tribal system but not the memories of tribal allegiance. According to a 1977 report, a survey of tribes had found that more than three-fourths of the members canvassed were still proud of their tribe and of their membership in it. Yet the attitude shown was a generally mild one; there was little opposition to the new programs and some recognition of the government's efforts on their behalf.

The conversion of nomads into sedentary villagers was accompanied or followed by the selective depopulation of many villages, as a disproportionate number of men between fifteen and forty-five left their herds, farms, and villages to seek urban employment. Their defection was a decisive factor in a decline in agricultural production during the 1970s. As a result, the revolutionary government adopted a variety of measures aimed at stemming the migration. Of particular importance was an extremely ambitious 10-year agricultural land reclamation and farmer resettlement scheme initiated in 1972; its aim was to reclaim 1 million hectares of land and provide farms for tens of thousands of rural families. The hold of tradition showed in Cyrenaica, however, where farmers chose to resettle only in projects located in their tribal areas, where they could preserve both tribal and territorial linkages.

Still, many of the most energetic and productive were leaving the countryside to seek employment in cities, oil fields, or construction work or to become settlers in the new agricultural development schemes. In some cases entire farm villages considered by the government to be no longer viable were abandoned and their populations were moved elsewhere; thus, the social and political influence of local leaders was ended forever. At the same time modernization was coming to villages in the form of schools, hospitals, electric lights, and other twentieth-century features. In an increasing number of rural localities, former farm laborers who had received titles to farms also owned a house in which electricity, water, and modern appliances (including a radio and perhaps a television set) made their residences almost indistinguishable from those of prosperous urban dwellers.

In their September 1969 revolution, Qadhafi and the young officers who provided most of his support aimed with idealistic fervor at bringing to an end the social inequities that had marked both the colonial periods and the monarchical regime. The new government that resulted was socialist, but Qadhafi stressed that it was to be a kind of socialism inspired by the humanitarian values inherent in Islam. It called for equitable distribution to reduce disparities between classes in a peaceful and affluent society, but in no sense was it to be a stage on the road to communism.

On the eve of the 1969 revolution, the royal family and its most eminent supporters and officeholders, drawn from a restricted circle of wealthy
and influential families, dominated Libyan society. These constituted what may be termed the traditional sociopolitical establishment, which rested on patronage, clientage, and dependency. Beneath this top echelon was a small middle class. The Libyan middle class had always been quite small, but it had expanded significantly under the impact of oil wealth. In the mid-1960s, it consisted of several distinct social groupings: salaried religious leaders and bureaucrats, old families engaged in importing and contracting, entrepreneurs in the oil business, shopkeepers, self-employed merchants and artisans and prosperous farmers and beduin. Workers in small industrial workshops, agricultural laborers, and peasant farmers, among others, composed the lower class.

Most of the urban population consisted of the families of first-generation workers, small shopkeepers, and a horde of public workers. Above them were thin layers of the newly rich and of old, prosperous families. An urban working class, however, had largely failed to develop, and the middle class was a feeble one that in no way resembled the counterpart element that had become a vital political force in many other countries of the Arab world.

At the top of the rural social structure, the shaykhs of the major tribes ruled on the basis of inherited status. In the cities, corresponding roles were played by the heads of the wealthy families and by religious figures. These leaders were jealous of their position and, far from concerning themselves with furthering social progress, saw modernization as a threat. In no way, however, did the leaders present a united front.

The development of the petroleum industry was accompanied by profound technical and organizational changes and by the appearance of a younger elite whose outlook had been greatly affected by technological advances: among their number were technocrats, students, and young army officers. Not the least notable of the factors that set this new element apart was age. The civilians of this group, as well as the military officers, were for the most part in their thirties or younger, and their views had little in common with those of the aging authorities who had long controlled a swollen bureaucracy (11 percent of the 1969 labor force). More urbanized and better educated than their elders, this new group entertained hopes and aspirations that had been frustrated by the group surrounding King Idris. In particular, resentment had been aroused by the arbitrariness, corruption, and inefficiency of Idris' government as well as by its questionable probity in the distribution of oil-funded revenues.

The young officers who formed the Free Officers Movement and its political nucleus, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), showed a great deal of dedication to the revolutionary cause and a high degree of uniformity in political and economic outlook. In Libya, as in a number of other Arab countries, admission to the military academy and careers as army officers were options available to members of the less privileged economic strata only after national independence was attained. A military career, offering new opportunities for higher education and
upward economic and social mobility, was thus a greater attraction for young men from poorer families than for those of the wealthy and the traditional elite. These youthful revolutionaries came from quite modest social backgrounds, representing the oases and the interior as opposed to the coastal cities, and the minor suppressed tribes as opposed to the major aristocratic ones.

The officers of the RCC--all captains and lieutenants--represented the forefront of a social revolution that saw the middle and lower middle classes assert control over social and political prerogatives heretofore denied them. They quickly displaced the former elite of the Idris era and became themselves the prime movers of the Libyan state. Numbering only about a dozen men, they were gradually joined by sympathetic civilian and military personnel in constituting a new elite.

By the late 1980s, this governing class consisted of Qadhafi and the half-dozen remaining members of the Free Officers Movement, government ministers and other high state officials and managers, second-echelon officers of the Free Officers Movement, and top officials and activists of local mass organizations and governing councils. Civilian officials and bureaucrats as a whole were considerably better educated than their military colleagues. Many of them possessed college degrees, came from urban middle-class backgrounds, and were indispensable for the administrative functioning of government and the economy. Below this elite was the upper middle class composed of educated technocrats, administrators, and remnants of a wealthy commercial and entrepreneurial class. The lower middle class contained small traders, teachers, successful farmers, and low-level officials and bureaucrats. This new and small revolutionary elite sought to restructure Libyan society. In broad terms, the young officers set off to create an egalitarian society in which class differences would be minimal and the country's oil wealth would be equally shared. Their aim was to curb the power and wealth of the old elite and to build support among the middle and lower middle classes from which they had come and with which they identified. The policies they devised to remold society after 1969 entailed extension of state control over the national economy, creation of a new political structure, and redistribution of wealth and opportunity through such measures as minimum wage laws, state employment, and the welfare state.

The Arab Socialist Union (ASU) created in 1971 was thus intended as a mass mobilization device. Its aim was the peaceful abolition of class differences to avoid the tragedy of a class struggle; the egalitarian nature of its composition was shown by a charter prescribing that, at all levels, 50 percent of its members must be peasants and laborers. At the heart of the cultural revolution of 1973 was the establishment of people's committees. These were made up of working-level leaders in business and government, who became the local elites in the new society. That same year brought enactment of a law requiring that larger business firms share profits with their personnel, appoint workers to their boards of directors, and establish joint councils composed of workers and
managers.

At the same time, the government launched a long-term campaign against a new privileged class pejoratively identified as "bourgeois bureaucrats." Multiple dismissals at this time included top university administrators, hospital directors, and oil-industry officials, as well as numerous lower ranking employees. However, in 1975, public administrators, including educational and public health service, made up nearly 24 percent of the labor force---more than twice the proportion at the time of the monarchy's demise. Late in 1976, a newspaper editorial complained that the labor force still contained tens of thousands of administrators and supervisors--most of them in the public sector---while in other countries this element seldom exceeded 2 percent of the total.

Having attacked the bureaucracy and concentrations of wealth and privilege, the regime in the later 1970s dealt with the entrepreneurial middle class. The first restrictions on private traders appeared as early as 1975, but the real blows came a few years later. A 1978 law struck at much-prized investments in private property by limiting ownership of houses and apartments to one per nuclear family, although the government promised compensation to the dispossessed. New restrictions were placed on commercial and industrial establishments, foreign trade became a monopoly of public corporations, workers assumed control of major industrial and commercial enterprises, and private wholesale trade was abolished. Finally, state investments and subsidies were shifted away from small businesspeople.

Although the Libyan middle class was suppressed by the abovementioned restrictions in the late 1970s, it was not destroyed. Indeed, a significant number of its members adapted themselves to the social dictates of the revolutionary regime by cooperation with it or by recruitment into the modernizing state apparatus. Its ranks still contained educated technocrats and administrators, without whose talents the state could not function, as well as remnants of the commercial and entrepreneurial class, some of them well-to-do. A separate category of small traders, shopkeepers, and farmers could also be identified. They, too, sought careers in the state sector, although many of them continued to operate small businesses alongside public enterprises. Those who could not adapt or who feared persecution fled abroad in significant numbers.

In contrast with the old regime, it was now possible for members of the middle and lower classes to seek and gain access to positions of influence and power. The former criteria of high family or tribal status had given way to education to a considerable degree, although patronage and loyalty continued to be rewarded as well. But in general, social mobility was much improved, a product of the revolutionary order that encouraged participation and leadership in such new institutions as the Basic People's Congress and the revolutionary committees. Only the highest positions occupied by Qadhafi and a small number of his associates were beyond the theoretical reach of the politically ambitious.
The core elite in the 1980s, which consisted of Qadhafi and the few remaining military officers of the RCC, presented a significant contrast of its own with respect to the top political leadership of the Idris era. This was the result of a commitment to national unity and identity, as well as of common social background. Within this small group, the deeply ingrained regional cleavages of the past, particularly that between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, had almost disappeared and were no longer of political significance. Similarly, the ethnic distinction between Arab and Berber within the elite was no longer important. The old urban-rural and center-periphery oppositions, remained very important, but they did not characterize the core elite itself. Rather, they differentiated the core elite from the country's former rulers, because the revolutionary leadership was deeply rooted in the rural periphery, not the Mediterranean coastal centers.

The rest of society, including government officials immediately below Qadhafi, appeared to be a good deal less unified. Despite the exertions of the core elite, a sense of national unity and identity had not yet developed in the late 1980s, and loyalty to region, tribe, and family remained stronger than allegiance to the state. There was much alienation from the regime, often expressed in terms of lethargy and passivity. Incessant pressures on the part of the regime to enlist as many people as possible in running public affairs had provoked much resentment and resistance. Many adults did not participate, despite the exhortations and oversight of the revolutionary committees, themselves a source of uncertainly and anxiety.

All of these pressures applied to the educated middle class, estimated to number perhaps 50,000 out of a total population of 3.6 million. Many were clearly alienated by the shortages of consumer goods, the militarization of society, and the constant demands to participate actively in the institutions of the jamahiriya, sentiments that characterized other social classes as well. Like their fellow citizens, the educated sought refuge in the affairs of their families, demonstrating yet again the strength of traditional values over revolutionary norms, or in foreign travel, especially in Europe.

The country's youth were also pulled in opposite directions. By the mid-1980s, the vast majority knew only the revolutionary era and its achievements. Because these gains were significant, not surprisingly young people were among the most dedicated and visible devotees of the revolution and Qadhafi. They had benefited most from increased educational opportunities, attempted reforms of dowry payments, and the emancipation of young women. Libyan youth also enjoyed far more promising employment prospects than their counterparts elsewhere in the Maghrib.

With few outlets such as recreation centers or movies for their energies, a large number of the youth were found in the revolutionary committees, where they pursued their task of enforcing political conformity and participation with a vigor that at times approached fanaticism. Others kept watch over the state administration and industry in an attempt to
improve efficiency. Not all were so enthusiastic about revolutionary goals, however. For instance, there was distaste for military training among students in schools and universities, especially when it presaged service in the armed forces. In the 1980s, some of this disdain had resulted in demonstrations and even in executions.

By the late 1980s, Libyan society clearly showed the impact of almost two decades of attempts at restructuring. The country was an army-dominated state under the influence of no particular class or group and was relatively free from the clash of competing interests. Almost all sources of power in traditional life had been eliminated or coopted. Unlike states such as Saudi Arabia that endeavored to develop their societies within the framework of traditional political and economic systems, Libya had discarded most of the traditional trappings and was using its great wealth to transform the country and its people.

With its highly egalitarian socialist regime, Libya differed considerably in its social structure from other oil-rich states. Salaries and wages were high, and social services were extensive and free. There was much less accumulation of private wealth than in other oil states, and social distinction was discouraged as a matter of deliberate public policy. But Libyan society was deeply divided, and entire segments of the population were only superficially committed to the course that the revolutionary regime had outlined. And while the old order was clearly yielding to the new, there was much doubt and unease about where society and state were headed.

Social life in Libya centered traditionally on the individual's family loyalty, which overrode other obligations. Ascribed status often outweighed personal achievement in regulating social relationships, and the individual's honor and dignity were tied to the good repute of the kin group, especially to that of its women.

Women have played a role secondary to that of men in most aspects of life, and tradition has prescribed that they remain in the home, often in seclusion. The status of women in the 1970s, however, improved substantially, and the once-common seclusion became less common, Nonetheless, to a considerable extent the two sexes continued to constitute largely separate subsocieties, each with its own values, attitudes, and perceptions of the other.

Libyans reckon kinship patrilineally, and the household is based on blood ties between men. A typical household consists of a man, his wife, his single and married sons with their wives and children, his unmarried daughters, and perhaps other relatives, such as a widowed or divorced
mother or sister. At the death of the father, each son ideally establishes his own household to begin the cycle again. Because of the centrality of family life, it is assumed that all persons will marry when they reach an appropriate age. Adult status is customarily bestowed only on married men and, frequently, only on fathers.

In traditional North African society, family patriarchs ruled as absolute masters over their extended families, and in Libya the institution seems to have survived somewhat more tenaciously than elsewhere in the area. Despite the changes in urban and rural society brought about by the 1969 revolution, the revolutionary government has repeatedly stated that the family is the core of society.

The 1973 census, the last for which complete data were available in mid-1987, showed that the typical household consisted of five to six individuals and that about 12 percent of the households were made up of eight or more members. The pattern was about the same as that reported from the 1964 census, and a 1978 Tripoli newspaper article called attention to the continued strength of the extended family. Individuals subordinated their personal interests to those of the family and considered themselves to be members of a group whose importance outweighed their own. Loyalty to family, clan, and tribe outweighed loyalty to a profession or class and inhibited the emergence of new leaders and a professional elite.

Marriage is more a family than a personal affair and a civil contract rather than a religious act. Because the sexes generally were unable to mix socially, young men and women enjoyed few acquaintances among the opposite sex. Parents arranged marriages for their children, finding a mate either through their own social contacts or through a professional matchmaker. Unions between the children of brothers were customarily preferred, or at least matches between close relatives or within the same tribe. One study, however, showed that many marriages occurred outside these bounds, the result of increased levels of education and internal migration. Nomads, particularly the Tuareg, have always allowed much more freedom of choice and courtship.

According to law, the affianced couple must have given their consent to the marriage, but in practice the couple tends to take little part in the arrangements. The contract establishes the terms of the union and outlines appropriate recourse if they are broken. The groom's family provides a dowry, which can amount to the equivalent of US$10,000 in large cities. Accumulation of the requisite dowry may be one reason that males tend to be several years older than females at the time of marriage.

Islamic law gives the husband far greater discretion and far greater leeway with respect to marriage than it gives the wife. For example, the husband may take up to four wives at one time, provided that he can treat them equally; a woman, however, can have only one husband at a time. Despite the legality of polygyny, only 3 percent of marriages in the 1980s were polygynous, the same as a decade earlier. A man can divorce his wife simply by repeating "I divorce thee" three times before
witnesses; a woman can initiate divorce proceedings only with great
difficulty. Any children of the union belong to the husband's family and
remain with him after the divorce.

Both the monarchical and revolutionary governments enacted statutes
improving the position of females with respect to marriage. The
minimum age for marriage was set at sixteen for females and at eighteen
for males. Marriage by proxy has been forbidden, and a 1972 law
prescribes that a girl cannot be married against her will or when she is
under the age of sixteen. Should her father forbid her marriage to a man
whom she has chosen for herself, a girl who is a minor (under the age of
twenty-one) may petition a court for permission to proceed with her
marriage.

The revolutionary government has enacted several statutes expanding
women's rights and restricting somewhat those of men in matters of
divorce. Women received increased rights to seek divorce or separation
by either customary or legal means in cases of abandonment or
mistreatment. Other laws prohibit a man from taking a second spouse
without first obtaining the approval of his first wife and forbid a
divorced man from marrying an alien woman, even an Arab from
another country. A companion law prohibits men in the employ of the
state from marrying non-Arab women. Yet the child born abroad of a
Libyan father is eligible for Libyan citizenship irrespective of the
mother's nationality, while a child born to a Libyan mother would not be
accorded automatic Libyan citizenship.

In a society as tradition-bound as Libya's, the effects of these new laws
were problematic. Despite the backing of the regime and Qadhafi's calls
for still further modifications in favor of women, the society reportedly
was not yet ready to acknowledge the new rights, and women were still
hesitant in claiming them.

The social setting of the family significantly affects the circumstances of
a wife. Until the discovery of petroleum--and to a lesser degree until the
1969 revolution--conservative attitudes and values about women
dominated society. By the 1980s, however, modifications in the
traditional relationship between the sexes were becoming evident, and
important changes were appearing in the traditional role of women.
These varied with the age, education, and place of residence of the
women.

In traditional society, beduin women--who did not wear the veil that
symbolized the inferior and secluded status of women--played a
relatively open part in tribal life. Women in villages also frequently were
unveiled and participated more actively in the affairs of their community
than did their urban counterparts. Their relative freedom, however, did
not ordinarily permit their exposure to outsiders. A sociologist visiting a
large oasis village as recently as the late 1960s told of being unable to see the women of the community and of being forced to canvass their opinions by means of messages passed by their husbands. The extent to which the community was changing, however, was indicated by the considerable number of girls in secondary school and the ability of young women to find modern-sector jobs—opportunities that had come into being only during the 1960s.

Urban women tended to be more sophisticated and socially aware, but they were also more conservative in social relations and dress. For example, unlike rural women, who moved freely in the fields and villages, urban women walked in the street discreetly in veiled pairs, avoiding public gathering places as well as social contact with men. Among the upper class urban families, women fulfilled fewer and less important economic functions, and their responsibilities were often limited to the household. Greater sexual segregation was imposed in the cities than in the countryside because tribal life and life in farm villages made segregation virtually impossible.

While women remained in the home, men formed a society organized into several recognizable groupings. These consisted of such coteries as school classmates, village or family work associates, athletic clubs, or circles of friends meeting in a cafe. In earlier times, the group might have been a religious brotherhood.

Like all Arabs, Libyans valued men more highly than women. Girls' upbringing quickly impressed on them that they were inferior to men and must cater to them; boys learned that they were entitled to demand the care and concern of women. Men regarded women as creatures apart, weaker than men in mind, body, and spirit. They were considered more sensual, less disciplined, and in need of protection from both their own impulses and the excesses of strange men.

The honor of the men of the family, easily damaged and nearly irreparable, depended on the conduct of their women. Wives, sisters, and daughters were expected to be circumspect, modest, and decorous, with their virtue above reproach. The slightest implication of unavenged impropriety, especially if made public, could irreparably destroy a family's honor. Female virginity before marriage and sexual fidelity thereafter were essential to honor's maintenance, and discovery of a transgression traditionally bound men of the family to punish the offending woman.

A girl's parents were eager for her to marry at the earliest possible age in order to forestall any loss of her virginity. After marriage, the young bride went to the home of her bridegroom's family, often in a village or neighborhood where she was a stranger and into a household where she lived under the constant and sometimes critical surveillance of her mother-in-law, a circumstance that frequently led to a great deal of friction. In traditional society, girls were married in their early teens to men considerably their senior. A woman began to attain status and security in her husband's family only if she produced boys. Mothers
accordingly favored sons, and in later life the relationship between mother and son often remained warm and intimate, whereas the father was a more distant figure. Throughout their years of fertility, women were assumed to retain an irrepressible sexual urge, and it was only after menopause that a supposed asexuality bestowed on them a measure of freedom and some of the respect accorded senior men. Old age was assumed to commence with menopause, and the female became an *azuz*, or old woman.

The roles and status of women have been the subject of a great deal of discussion and legal action in Libya, as they have in many countries of the Middle East. Some observers suggested that the regime made efforts on behalf of female emancipation because it viewed women as an essential source of labor in an economy chronically starved for workers. They also postulated that the government was interested in expanding its political base, hoping to curry favor by championing female rights. Since independence, Libyan leaders have been committed to improving the condition of women but within the framework of Arabic and Islamic values. For this reason, the pace of change has been slow.

Nonetheless, by the 1980s relations within the family and between the sexes, along with all other aspects of Libyan life, had begun to show notable change. As the mass media popularized new ideas, new perceptions and practices appeared. Foreign settlers and foreign workers frequently embodied ideas and values distinctively different from those traditional in the country. In particular, the perceptions of Libyans in everyday contact with Europeans were affected.

The continued and accelerating process of urbanization has broken old kinship ties and association with ancestral rural communities. At the same time, opportunities for upward social movement have increased, and petroleum wealth and the development plans of the revolutionary government have made many new kinds of employment available—for the first time including jobs for women. Especially among the educated young, a growing sense of individualism has appeared. Many of these educated and increasingly independent young people prefer to set up their own households at marriage rather than live with their parents, and they view polygyny with scorn. In addition, social security, free medical care, education, and other appurtenances of the welfare state have lessened the dependence of the aged on their children in village communities and have almost eliminated it in the cities.

In the 1970s, female emancipation was in large measure a matter of age. One observer generalized that city women under the age of thirty-five had discarded the traditional veil and were quite likely to wear Western-style clothing. Those between the ages of thirty-five and forty-five were increasingly ready to consider such a change, but women over the age of forty-five appeared reluctant to give up the protection their veils and
customary dress afforded. A decade later, veiling was uncommon among urban women, as it had always been in rural areas. Women were also increasingly seen driving, shopping, or traveling without husbands or male companions.

Since the early 1960s, Libyan women have had the right to vote and to participate in political life. They could also own and dispose of property independently of their husbands, but all of these rights were exercised by only a few women before the 1969 revolution. Since then, the government has encouraged women to participate in elections and national political institutions, but in 1987 only one woman had advanced as far as the national cabinet, as an assistant secretary for information and culture.

Women were also able to form their own associations, the first of which dated to 1955 in Benghazi. In 1970 several feminist organizations merged into the Women's General Union, which in 1977 became the Jamahiriya Women's Federation. Under Clause 5 of the Constitutional Proclamation of December 11, 1969, women had already been given equal status under the law with men. Subsequently, the women's movement has been active in such fields as adult education and hygiene. The movement has achieved only limited influence, however, and its most active members have felt frustrated by their inability to gain either direct or indirect political influence.

Women had also made great gains in employment outside the home, the result of improved access to education and of increased acceptance of female paid employment. Once again, the government was the primary motivating force behind this phenomenon. For example, the 1976-80 development plan called for employment of a larger number of women "in those spheres which are suitable for female labor," but the Libyan identification of what work was suitable for women continued to be limited by tradition. According to the 1973 census, the participation rate for women (the percent of all women engaged in economic activity) was about 3 percent as compared with 37 percent for men. The participation was somewhat higher than the 2.7 percent registered in 1964, but it was considerably lower than that in other Maghrib countries and in most of the Middle Eastern Arab states.

In the 1980s, in spite of the gain registered by women during the prior decade, females constituted only 7 percent of the national labor force, according to one informed researcher. This represented a 2-percent increase over a 20-year period. Another source, however, considered these figures far too low. Reasoning from 1973 census figures and making allowances for full- and part-time, seasonal, paid, and unpaid employment, these researchers argued convincingly that women formed more than 20 percent of the total economically active Libyan population. For rural areas their figure was 46 percent, far higher than official census numbers for workers who in most cases were not only unpaid but not even considered as employed.

Among nonagricultural women, those who were educated and skilled
were overwhelmingly employed as teachers. The next highest category of educated and skilled women was nurses and those found in the health-care field. Others areas that were open to women included administrative and clerical work in banks, department stores, and government offices, and domestic services. Women were found in ever larger numbers as nurses and midwives, but even so, Libyan health care facilities suffered from a chronic shortage of staff.

By contrast, in clerical and secretarial jobs, the problem was not a shortage of labor but a deep-seated cultural bias against the intermingling of men and women in the workplace. During the 1970s, the attraction of employment as domestics tended to decline, as educated and ambitious women turned to more lucrative occupations. To fill the gap, Libyan households sought to hire foreigners, particularly Egyptians and Tunisians.

Light industry, especially cottage-style, was yet another outlet for female labor, a direct result of Libya's labor shortage. Despite these employment outlets and gains, female participation in the work force of the 1980s remained small, and many so-called "female jobs" were filled by foreign women. Also, in spite of significant increases in female enrollments in the educational system, including university level, few women were found, even as technicians, in such traditionally male fields as medicine, engineering, and law.

Nonurban women constituted a quite significant if largely invisible proportion of the rural work force, as mentioned. According to the 1973 census, there were only 14,000 economically active women out of a total of 200,000 rural females older than age 10. In all likelihood, however, many women engaged in agricultural or domestic tasks worked as unpaid members of family groups and hence were not regarded as gainfully employed, accounting at least in part for the low census count. Estimates of actual female rural employment in the mid-1970s, paid and unpaid, ranged upward of 86,000, as compared with 96,000 men in the rural work force. In addition to agriculture, both rural and nomadic women engaged in the weaving of rugs and carpets, another sizable category of unpaid and unreported labor.

Beginning in 1970, the revolutionary government passed a series of laws regulating female employment. Equal pay for equal work and qualifications became a fundamental precept. Other statutes strictly regulated the hours and conditions of work. Working mothers enjoyed a range of benefits designed to encourage them to continue working even after marriage and childbirth, including cash bonuses for the first child and free day-care centers. A woman could retire at age fifty-five, and she was entitled to a pension. Recently, the regime has sought to introduce women into the armed forces. In the early 1980s the so-called Nuns of the Revolution were created as a special police force attached to revolutionary committees. Then in 1984 a law mandating female conscription that required all students in secondary schools and above to participate in military training was passed. In addition, young women were encouraged to attend female military academies, the first of which
was established in 1979. These proposals originated with Qadhafi, who hoped that they would help create a new image and role for the Libyan woman. Nonetheless, the concept of female training in the martial arts encountered such widespread opposition that meaningful compliance seemed unlikely.

The status of women was thus an issue that was very much alive. There could be no doubt that the status of women had undergone a remarkable transformation since the 1969 revolution, but cultural norms were proving to be a powerful brake on the efforts of the Qadhafi regime to force the pace of that transformation. And despite the exertions and rhetoric of the government, men continued to play the leading roles in family and society. As one observer pointed out, political and social institutions were each pulling women in opposite directions. In the late 1980s, the outcome of that contest was by no means a foregone conclusion.

Nearly all Libyans adhere to the Sunni branch of Islam, which provides both a spiritual guide for individuals and a keystone for government policy. Its tenets stress a unity of religion and state rather than a separation or distinction between the two, and even those Muslims who have ceased to believe fully in Islam retain Islamic habits and attitudes. Since the 1969 coup, the Qadhafi regime has explicitly endeavored to reaffirm Islamic values, enhance appreciation of Islamic culture, elevate the status of Quranic law and, to a considerable degree, emphasize Quranic practice in everyday Libyan life.

In A.D. 610, Muhammad (the Prophet), a prosperous merchant of the town of Mecca, began to preach the first of a series of revelations said to have been granted him by God (Allah) through the agency of the archangel Gabriel. The divine messages, received during solitary visits into the desert, continued during the remainder of his life.

Muhammad denounced the polytheistic paganism of his fellow Meccans, his vigorous and continuing censure ultimately earning him their bitter enmity. In 622 he and a group of his followers were forced to flee to Yathrib, which became known as Medina (the city) through its association with him. The hijra (flight: known in the West as the hegira) marked the beginning of the Islamic era and of Islam as a powerful historical force; the Muslim calendar begins with the year 622. In Medina Muhammad continued his preaching, ultimately defeated his detractors in battle, and had consolidated the temporal as well as spiritual leadership of most Arabs in his person before his death in 632.

After Muhammad's death, his followers compiled his words that were regarded as coming directly from God in a document known as the Quran, the holy scripture of Islam. Other sayings and teachings of the Prophet, as well as the precedents of his personal behavior as recalled by
those who had known him, became the hadith ("sayings"). From these sources, the faithful have constructed the Prophet's customary practice, or *sunna*, which they endeavor to emulate. Together, these documents form a comprehensive guide to the spiritual, ethical, and social life of the faithful in most Muslim countries.

In a short time, Islam was transformed from a small religious community into a dynamic political and military authority. During the seventh century, Muslim conquerors reached Libya, and by the eighth century most of the resistance mounted by the indigenous Berbers had ended. The urban centers soon became substantially Islamic, but widespread conversion of the nomads of the desert did not come until after large-scale invasions in the eleventh century by beduin tribes from Arabia and Egypt.

A residue of pre-Islamic beliefs blended with the pure Islam of the Arabs. Hence, popular Islam became an overlay of Quranic ritual and principles upon the vestiges of earlier beliefs--prevalent throughout North Africa--in jinns (spirits), the evil eye, rites to ensure good fortune, and cult veneration of local saints. The educated of the cities and towns served as the primary bearers and guardians of the more austere brand of orthodox Islam.

Islam
Saints and Brotherhoods
Sanusi
Islam in Revolutionary Libya

The *shahadah* (profession of faith, or testimony) states succinctly the central belief, "There is no God but God Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet." The faithful repeat this simple profession on ritual occasions, and its recital designates the speaker as a Muslim. The term *Islam* means submission to God, and he who submits is a Muslim.

The God preached by Muhammad was previously known to his countrymen, for *Allah* is the general Arabic term for the supreme being rather than the name of a particular deity. Rather than introducing a new deity, Muhammad denied the existence of the pantheon of gods and spirits worshipped before his prophethood and declared the omnipotence of God, the unique creator. Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets," the last of the prophetic line. His revelations are said to complete for all time the series of revelations that had been given earlier to Jews and Christians. God is believed to have remained one and the same throughout time, but humans are seen as having misunderstood or strayed from God's true teachings until set aright by Muhammad. Prophets and sages of the biblical tradition, such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are recognized as inspired vehicles of God's will. Islam, however, reveres as sacred only the message, rejecting Christianity's
deification of the messenger. It accepts the concepts of guardian angels, the Day of Judgment, resurrection, and the eternal life of the soul.

The duties of the Muslim form the "five pillars" of the faith. These are shahadah, salat (daily prayer), zakat (almsgiving), sawm (fasting), and hajj (pilgrimage). The believer prays facing Mecca at five specified times during the day. Whenever possible, men observe their prayers in congregation at a mosque under direction of an imam, or prayer leader, and on Fridays are obliged to do so. Women are permitted to attend public worship at the mosque, where they are segregated from men, but their attendance tends to be discouraged, and more frequently they pray in the seclusion of their homes.

In the early days of Islam, a tax for charitable purposes was imposed on personal property in proportion to the owner's wealth; the payment purified the remaining wealth and made it religiously legitimate. The collection of this tax and its distribution to the needy were originally functions of the state. But with the breakdown of Muslim religiopolitical authority, alms became an individual responsibility. With the discovery of petroleum in Libya and the establishment of a welfare society, almsgiving has been largely replaced by public welfare and its significance diluted accordingly.

Fasting is practiced during the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, Ramadan, the time during which the first chapters of the Quran were revealed to Muhammad. It is a period during which most Muslims must abstain from food, drinking, smoking, and sexual activity during the daylight hours. The well-to-do accomplish little work during this period, and many businesses close or operate on reduced schedules. Because the months of the lunar calendar revolve through the solar year, Ramadan occurs during various seasons. In Libya, among the strictest of Muslim countries, cafes must remain closed during the day. But they open their doors after dark, and feasting takes place during the night.

Finally, at least once during their lifetime all Muslims should make the hajj to the holy city of Mecca to participate in the special rites that occur during the twelfth month of the lunar calendar. Upon completion of this and certain other ritual assignments, the returning pilgrim is entitled to the honorific "al Haj," before his name.

In addition to prescribing specific duties, Islam imposes a code of conduct entailing generosity, fairness, honesty, and respect for others. Its proscribes adultery, gambling, usury, and the consumption of carrion, blood, pork, and alcohol. Although proscription of alcohol is irregularly enforced in most Muslim countries, the Libyan revolutionary government has been strict in ensuring that its prohibition be effective, even in the households of foreign diplomats.

Muslims traditionally are subject to the sharia, or religious law, which--as interpreted by religious courts--covers most aspects of life. In Libya the Maliki school is followed. One of several schools of Islamic law, it predominates throughout North Africa. The sharia, which was developed
by jurists from the Quran and from the traditions of the Prophet, provides a complete pattern for human conduct.

Islam as practiced in North Africa is interlaced with indigenous Berber beliefs. Although the orthodox faith preached the unique and inimitable majesty and sanctity of God and the equality of God's believers, an important element of North African Islam for centuries has been a belief in the coalescence of special spiritual power in particular living human beings. The power is known as *baraka*, a transferable quality of personal blessedness and spiritual force said to lodge in certain individuals. Those whose claim to possess *baraka* can be substantiated—through performance of apparent miracles, exemplary human insight, or genealogical connection with a recognized possessor—are viewed as saints. These persons are known in the West as marabouts, a French transliteration of *al murabitun* (those who have made a religious retreat), and the benefits of their *baraka* are believed to accrue to those ordinary people who come in contact with them.

The cult of saints became widespread in rural areas; in urban localities, Islam in its orthodox form continued to prevail. Saints were present in Tripolitania, but they were particularly numerous in Cyrenaica. Their *baraka* continued to reside in their tombs after their deaths. The number of venerated tombs varied from tribe to tribe, although there tended to be fewer among the camel herders of the desert than among the sedentary and nomadic tribes of the plateau area. In one village, a visitor in the late 1960s counted sixteen still-venerated tombs.

Coteries of disciples frequently clustered around particular saints, especially those who preached an original *tariqa* (devotional "way"). Brotherhoods of the followers of such mystical teachers appeared in North Africa at least as early as the eleventh century and in some cases became mass movements. The founder ruled an order of followers, who were organized under the frequently absolute authority of a leader, or shaykh. The brotherhood was centered on a *zawiya* (pl., *zawaya*).

Because of Islam's austere rational and intellectual qualities, many people have felt drawn toward the more emotional and personal ways of knowing God practiced by mystical Islam, or Sufism. Found in many parts of the Muslim world, Sufism endeavored to produce a personal experience of the divine through mystic and ascetic discipline.

Sufi adherents gathered into brotherhoods, and Sufi cults became extremely popular, particularly in rural areas. Sufi brotherhoods exercised great influence and ultimately played an important part in the religious revival that swept through North Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Libya, when the Ottoman Empire proved unable to mount effective resistance to the encroachment of Christian missionaries, the work was taken over by Sufi-inspired revivalist
movements. Among these, the most forceful and effective was that of the Sanusis, which extended into numerous parts of North Africa.

The Sanusis formed a nucleus of resistance to the Italian colonial regime. As the nationalism fostered by unified resistance to the Italians gained adherents, however, the religious fervor of devotion to the movement began to wane, particularly after the Italians destroyed Sanusi religious and educational centers during the 1930s. Nonetheless, King Idris, the monarch of independent Libya, was the grandson of the founder of the Sanusi movement, and his status as a Sanusi gave him the unique ability to command respect from the disparate parts of his kingdom.

Despite its momentary political prominence, the Sanusis were destroyed by the Italians. A promised restoration never fully took place, and the Idris regime used the Sanusi heritage as a means of legitimizing political authority rather than of providing religious leadership.

After unseating Idris in 1969, the revolutionary government placed restrictions on the operation of the remaining zawaya, appointed a supervisor for Sanusi properties, and merged the Sanusi-sponsored Islamic University with the University of Libya. The movement was virtually banned, but in the 1980s occasional evidence of Sanusi activity was nonetheless reported.

Under the revolutionary government, the role of orthodox Islam in Libyan life has become progressively more important. Qadhafi is a highly devout Muslim who has repeatedly expressed a desire to exalt Islam and to restore it to its proper--i.e., central--place in the life of the people. He believes that the purity of Islam has been sullied through time, particularly by the influence of Europeans during and after the colonial period, and that its purity must be restored--by such actions as the restoration of sharia to its proper place as the basis of the Libyan legal system, the banning of "immodest" practices and dress, and the symbolic purification of major urban mosques that took place in 1978.

Qadhafi also believes in the value of the Quran as a moral and political guide for the contemporary world, as is evident from his tract, The
Green Book, published in the mid-1970s. Qadhafi considers the first part of The Green Book to be a commentary on the implications of the Quranic injunction that human affairs be managed by consultation. For him, this means direct democracy, which is given "practical meaning" through the creation of people's committees and popular congresses. Qadhafi feels that, inasmuch as The Green Book is based solely on the Quran, its provisions are universally applicable--at least among Muslims.

Soon after taking office, the Qadhafi government showed itself to be devoutly fundamentalist by closing bars and nightclubs, banning entertainment deemed provocative or immodest, and making use of the Muslim calendar mandatory. The intention of reestablishing sharia was announced, and Qadhafi personally assumed chairmanship of a commission to study the problems involved. In November 1973, a new legal code was issued that revised the entire Libyan judicial system to conform to the sharia, and in 1977 the General People's Congress (GPC) issued a statement that all future legal codes would be based on the Quran.

Among the laws enacted by the Qadhafi government a series of legal penalties prescribed during 1973 included the punishment of armed robbery by amputation of a hand and a foot. The legislation contained qualifying clauses making its execution unlikely, but its enactment had the effect of applying Quranic principles in the modern era. Another act prescribed flogging for individuals breaking the fast of Ramadan, and yet another called for eighty lashes to be administered to both men and women guilty of fornication.

In the early 1970s, Islam played a major role in legitimizing Qadhafi's political and social reforms. By the end of the decade, however, he had begun to attack the religious establishment and several fundamental aspects of Sunni Islam. Qadhafi asserted the transcendence of the Quran as the sole guide to Islamic governance and the unimpeded ability of every Muslim to read and interpret it. He denigrated the roles of the ulama, imams, and Islamic jurists and questioned the authenticity of the hadith, and thereby the sunna, as a basis for Islamic law. The sharia itself, Qadhafi maintained, governed only such matters as properly fell within the sphere of religion; all other matters lay outside the purview of religious law. Finally, he called for a revision of the Muslim calendar, saying it should date from the Prophet's death in 632, an event he felt was more momentous than the hijra ten years earlier.

These unorthodox views on the hadith, sharia, and the Islamic era aroused a good deal of unease. They seemed to originate from Qadhafi's conviction that he possessed the transcendant ability to interpret the Quran and to adapt its message to modern life. Equally, they reinforced the view that he was a reformer but not a literalist in matters of the Quran and Islamic tradition. On a practical level, however, several observers agreed that Qadhafi was less motivated by religious convictions than by political calculations. By espousing these views and by criticizing the ulama, he was using religion to undermine a segment
of the middle class that was notably vocal in opposing his economic policies in the late 1970s. But Qadhafi clearly considered himself an authority on the Quran and Islam and was not afraid to challenge traditional religious authority. He also was not prepared to tolerate dissent.

The revolutionary government gave repeated evidence of its desire to establish Libya as a leader of the Islamic world. Moreover, Qadhafi's efforts to create an Arab nation through political union with other Arab states were also based on a desire to create a great Islamic nation. Indeed, Qadhafi drew little distinction between the two.

The government took a leading role in supporting Islamic institutions and in worldwide proselytizing on behalf of Islam. The Jihad Fund, supported by a payroll tax, was established in 1970 to aid the Palestinians in their struggle with Israel. The Faculty of Islamic Studies and Arabic at the University of Benghazi was charged with training Muslim intellectual leaders for the entire Islamic world, and the Islamic Mission Society used public funds for the construction and repair of mosques and Islamic educational centers in cities as widely separated as Vienna and Bangkok. The Islamic Call Society (Ad Dawah) was organized with government support to propagate Islam abroad, particularly throughout Africa, and to provide funds to Muslims everywhere.

Qadhafi has been forthright in his belief in the perfection of Islam and his desire to propagate it. His commitment to the open propagation of Islam, among other reasons, has caused him to oppose the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egyptian-based fundamentalist movement that has used clandestine and sometimes subversive means to spread Islam and to eliminate Western influences. Although the brotherhood's activities in Libya were banned in the mid-1980s, it was present in the country but maintained a low profile. In 1983 a member of the brotherhood was executed in Tripoli, and in 1986 a group of brotherhood adherents was arrested after the murder of a high-ranking political official in Benghazi. Qadhafi has challenged the brotherhood to establish itself openly in non-Muslim countries and has promised its leaders that, if it does, he will support its activities.

Qadhafi has stressed the universal applicability of Islam, but he has also reaffirmed the special status assigned by the Prophet to Christians. He has, however, likened them to misguided Muslims who have strayed from the correct path. Furthermore, he has assumed leadership of a drive to free Africa of Christianity as well as of the colonialism with which it has been associated.
A government advertisement appearing in an international publication in 1977 asserted that the Libyan social security legislation of 1973 ranked among the most comprehensive in the world and that it protected all citizens from many hazards associated with employment. The social security program instituted in 1957 had already provided protection superior to that available in many or most developing countries, and in the 1980s the welfare available to Libyans included much more than was provided under the social security law: work injury and sickness compensation and disability, retirement, and survivors' pensions. Workers employed by foreign firms were entitled to the same social security benefits as workers employed by Libyan citizens.

Subsidized food, inexpensive housing, free medical care and education, and profit-sharing were among the benefits that eased the lives of all citizens. The government protected the employed in their jobs and subsidized the underemployed and unemployed. In addition, there were nurseries to care for the children of working mothers, orphanages for homeless children, and homes for the aged. The welfare programs had reached even the oasis towns of the desert, where they reportedly were received with considerable satisfaction. The giving of alms to the poor remained one of the pillars of the Islamic faith, but the extent of public welfare was such that there was increasingly less place for private welfare. Nonetheless, the traditional Arab sense of family responsibility remained strong, and provision for needy relatives was still a common practice.

The number of physicians and surgeons in practice increased fivefold between 1965 and 1974, and large increases were registered in the number of dentists, medical, and paramedical personnel. Further expansion and improvement followed over the next decade in response to large budgetary outlays, as the revolutionary regime continued to use its oil income to improve the health and welfare of all Libyans. The number of doctors and dentists increased from 783 in 1970 to 5,450 in 1985, producing in the case of doctors a ratio of 1 per 673 citizens. These doctors were attached to a comprehensive network of health care facilities that dispensed free medical care. The number of hospital beds increased from 7,500 in 1970 to almost 20,000 by 1985, an improvement from 3.5 beds to 5.3 beds per 1,000 citizens. During the same years, substantial increases were also registered in the number of clinics and health care centers.

A large proportion of medical and paramedical personnel were foreigners brought in under contract from other Arab countries and from Eastern Europe. The major efforts to "Libyanize" health care professionals, however, were beginning to show results in the mid1980s. Libyan sources claimed that approximately 33 percent of all doctors were nationals in 1985, as compared with only about 6 percent a decade earlier. In the field of nursing staff and technicians, the situation was considerably better--about 80 percent were Libyan. Schools of nursing had been in existence since the early 1960s, and the faculties of medicine in the universities at Tripoli and Benghazi included specialized institutes for nurses and technicians. The first medical school was not
established until 1970, and there was no school of dentistry until 1974. By 1978 a total of nearly 500 students was enrolled in medical studies at schools in Benghazi and Tripoli, and the dental school in Benghazi had graduated its first class of 23 students. In addition, some students were pursuing graduate medical studies abroad, but in the immediate future Libya was expected to continue to rely heavily on expatriate medical personnel.

Among the major health hazards endemic in the country in the 1970s were typhoid and paratyphoid, infectious hepatitis, leishmaniasis, rabies, meningitis, schistosomiasis, and venereal diseases. Also reported as having high incidence were various childhood diseases, such as whooping cough, mumps, measles, and chicken pox. Cholera occurred intermittently and, although malaria was regarded as having been eliminated in the 1960s, malaria suppressants were often recommended for use in desert oasis areas.

By the early 1980s, it was claimed that most or all of these diseases were under control. A high rate of trachoma formerly left 10 percent or more of the population blinded or with critically impaired vision, but by the late 1970s the disease appeared to have been brought under control. The incidence of new cases of tuberculosis was reduced by nearly half between 1969 and 1976, and twenty-two new centers for tuberculosis care were constructed between 1970 and 1985. By the early 1980s, two rehabilitation centers for the handicapped had been built, one each in Benghazi and Tripoli. These offered both medical and job-training services and complemented the range of health care services available in the country.

The streets of Tripoli and Benghazi were kept scrupulously clean, and drinking water in these cities was of good quality. The government had made significant efforts to provide safe water. In summing up accomplishments since 1970, officials listed almost 1,500 wells drilled and more than 900 reservoirs in service in 1985, in addition to 9,000 kilometers of potable water networks and 44 desalination plants. Sewage disposal had also received considerable attention, twenty-eight treatment plants having been built.

Under the monarchy, all Libyans were guaranteed the right to education. Primary and secondary schools were established all over the country, and old Quranic schools that had been closed during the struggle for independence were reactivated and new ones established, lending a heavy religious cast to Libyan education. The educational program suffered from a limited curriculum, a lack of qualified teachers--especially Libyan--and a tendency to learn by rote rather than by reasoning, a characteristic of Arab education in general. School enrollments rose rapidly, particularly on the primary level; vocational education was introduced; and the first Libyan university was
established in Benghazi in 1955. Also under the monarchy, women began to receive formal education in increasing numbers, rural and beduin children were brought into the educational system for the first time, and an adult education program was established.

Total school enrollment rose from 34,000 on the eve of independence in 1951, to nearly 150,000 in 1962, to about 360,000 at the time of the 1969 revolution. During the 1970s, the training of teachers was pushed in an effort to replace the Egyptian and other expatriate personnel who made up the majority of the teaching corps. Prefabricated school buildings were erected, and mobile classrooms and classes held in tents became features of the desert oases.

In 1986 official sources placed total enrollments at more than 1,245,000 students, of whom 670,000 (54 percent) were males and 575,000 (46 percent) were females. These figures meant that one-third of the population was enrolled in some form of educational endeavor. For the 1970-86 period, the government claimed nearly 32,000 primary, secondary, and vocational classrooms had been constructed, while the number of teachers rose from nearly 19,000 to 79,000. The added space and increased number of new teachers greatly improved student-teacher ratios at preprimary and primary levels; rising enrollments in general secondary and technical education, however, increased the density of students per classroom at those levels.

At independence, the overall literacy rate among Libyans over the age of ten did not exceed 20 percent. By 1977, with expanding school opportunities, the rate had risen to 51 percent overall, or 73 percent for males and 31 percent for females. Relatively low though it was, the rate for females had soared from the scanty 6 percent registered as recently as 1964. In the early 1980s, only estimates of literacy were available--about 70 percent for men and perhaps 35 percent for women.

In 1987 education was free at all levels, and university students received substantial stipends. Attendance was compulsory between the ages of six and fifteen years or until completion of the preparatory cycle of secondary school. The administrative or current expenses budget for 1985 allocated 7.5 percent of the national budget (LD90.4 million) to education through university level. Allocations for 1983 and 1984 were slightly less--about LD85 million), just under 6 percent of total administrative outlays.

From its inception, the revolutionary regime placed great emphasis education, continuing and expanding programs begun under the monarchy. By the 1980s, the regime had made great strides, but much remained to be done. The country still suffered from a lack of qualified Libyan teachers, female attendance at the secondary level and above was low, and attempts in the late 1970s to close private schools and to integrate religious and secular instruction had led to confusion. Perhaps most important were lagging enrollments in vocational and technical training. As recently as 1977, fewer than 5,000 students were enrolled in 12 technical high schools. Although unofficial estimates placed technical
enrollments at nearly 17,000 by 1981, most doctors, dentists, and pharmacists in the early 1980s still came from abroad. Young Libyans continued to shun technical training, preferring white collar employment because it was associated with social respect and high status. As a consequence, there seemed to be no immediate prospect for reducing the heavy reliance on expatriate workers to meet the economy's increasing need for technical skills.

A major source of disruption was the issue of compulsory military training for both male and female students. Beginning in 1981, weapons training formed part of the curriculum of secondary schools and universities, part of a general military mobilization process. Both male and female secondary students wore uniforms to classes and attended daily military exercises; university students did not wear uniforms but were required to attend training camps. In addition, girls were officially encouraged to attend female military academies. These measures were by no means popular, especially as they related to females, but in the mid-1980s it was too soon to assess their impact on female school attendance and on general educational standards.

In 1987 the school program consisted of six years of primary school, three years of preparatory school (junior high), and three years of secondary (high) school. A five-year primary teaching program could be elected upon completion of primary school. A technical high-school program (including industrial subjects or commerce and agriculture) and two-year and four-year programs for the training of primary-school teachers were among the offerings at the secondary level. In the mid-1970s, nearly one-half of the primary, preparatory, and secondary enrollments were in Tripoli and Benghazi, but by the late 1980s schools were well distributed around the country, and boarding facilities for students from remote areas were available at some schools at all academic levels.

The enrollment of girls in primary schools increased from 34 percent of the total in 1970 to nearly 47 percent in 1979. During the same period, female enrollment in secondary schools was up from 13 percent to 23 percent, and in vocational schools from 23 percent to 56 percent of total enrollment. However, the number of girls attending school in some rural areas was well below the national average, and a high female dropout rate suggested that many parents sent their daughters to school only long enough to acquire basic skills to make them attractive marriage partners.

During the early 1980s, a variety of courses were taught in primary and secondary classes. English was introduced in the fifth primary grade and continued thereafter. Islamic studies and Arabic were offered at all levels of the curriculum, and several hours of classes each week were reportedly devoted to Qadhafi's Green Book.

The University of Libya was founded in Benghazi in 1955, with a branch in Tripoli. In 1973 the two campuses became the universities of Benghazi and Tripoli, respectively, and in 1976 they were renamed Gar Yunis University and Al Fatah University, respectively. In 1981 a
technical university specializing in engineering and petroleum opened at Marsa al Burayqah. Enrollments were projected at 1,700 students. In addition, there were technical institutes at Birak, Hun, and Bani Walid. By the early 1980s, schools of nuclear and electronic engineering and of pharmacy had been established at Al Fatah University, while plans called for the construction of an agricultural school at Al Bayda for 1,500 students.

Expansion of facilities for higher education was critical to meeting skilled personnel requirements. Technical education was being emphasized in keeping with a trend toward more specialized facilities for both secondary and university studies. In 1982 the GPC passed a resolution calling for the replacement of secondary schools by specialized training institutes whose curricula would be closely integrated with those of the universities and technical institutes. In 1985 the GPC called for a further expansion of vocational and professional training centers and for measures to compel technically trained students to work in their fields of specialization. Students were also expected to play a more active role in the economy as the country attempted to overcome the shortage of skilled manpower caused by the expulsion of foreign workers in 1985. In view of declining allocations for education in the mid-1980s, however, it was doubtful if these and other goals would be met.

University enrollment figures for the 1980s were unavailable in 1987. However, they had risen without interruption since the 1950s, and it seemed probable that this trend was continuing. About 3,000 students were enrolled in the University of Libya in 1969. By 1975 the figure was up to 12,000, and a 1980 total of 25,000 was projected. Female enrollments rose dramatically during this period, from 9 percent of total enrollments in the 1970-71 period, to 20 percent in the 1978-79 period, to 24 percent in the early 1980s.

In the 1970s, many students went abroad for university and graduate training; in 1978 about 3,000 were studying in the United States alone. In the early 1980s, however, the government was no longer willing to grant fellowships for study abroad, preferring to educate young Libyans at home for economic and political reasons. In 1985 Libyan students in Western countries were recalled and their study grants terminated. Although precise information was lacking, many students were reportedly reluctant to interrupt their programs and return home.

University students were restless and vocal but also somewhat lacking in application and motivation. They played an active role in university affairs through student committees, which debated a wide range of administrative and educational matters and which themselves became arenas for confrontation between radical and moderate factions. University students were also among the few groups to express open dissatisfaction with the Qadhafi government. One major source of tension arose from the regime's constant intervention to control and politicize education on all levels, whereas most Libyans regarded education as the path to personal and social advancement, best left free
of government meddling.

In 1976 students mounted violent protests in Benghazi and Tripoli over compulsory military training. More recently, in March 1986 students of the faculties of English and French at Al Fatah University successfully thwarted Qadhafi's attempt to close their departments and to destroy their libraries, part of the Arabization campaign and another of Qadhafi's steps to eliminate Western influence. A compromise was worked out whereby the departmental libraries were spared, but both foreign languages were gradually to be phased out of university curricula. After this incident, Qadhafi announced that Russian would be substituted for English in Libyan schools, a policy which, if implemented, was certain to cause both practical and political difficulties.

THE LIBYAN ECONOMY is unique in North Africa. Whereas Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia all have large populations, considerable agricultural potential, and well-established industrial bases, Libya possesses few of these advantages. It does however, have abundant energy resources--primarily an attractive type of light low-sulfur crude oil as well as some natural gas. Given the country's small population (3.6 million in 1984) and considerable petroleum-derived income, the Libyan economy has more in common with those of the small oil-exporting Persian Gulf states than with those of its North African neighbors.

Because of Libya's great dependence on oil revenues, the general level of the Libyan economy is closely related to the health of the petrochemical industry. Despite massive investment in agriculture and nonpetroleum-related industry, the percentage of Libya's gross domestic product (GDP) derived from oil has remained fairly constant since the early 1970s, fluctuating between 50 and 60 percent until 1982, when declining oil revenues caused it to drop below 50 percent. Since Muammar al Qadhafi and his associates came to power in 1969, reducing Libya's dependence on oil has been the government's major economic policy objective. Its inability to achieve this goal stems from ill-advised policy decisions as well as the many obstacles to economic diversification in a land lacking in both basic infrastructure and water resources.

Diversification is an important issue because at current rates of production, Libyan oil reserves are not expected to last beyond the second decade of the next century. Thus, the long-term health of the Libyan economy hinges on developing a self-sustaining nonpetroleum sector. Otherwise, once oil reserves are depleted, Libya will become as poor as it was before its current oil boom.

Libya's postindependence economic progress can be divided into four periods. The first period began with Libya's gaining of independence in 1951, included the discovery of oil in 1957, and ended in 1961. The
second period dates from 1961, when oil exports moved the country into the forefront of the world's economies. The September 1, 1969, military coup d'état marked the beginning of the third period, a period that saw Libya change from a Western-oriented capitalist country into a strongly nationalist, anti-Western, socialist state. This period also witnessed the government's growing intervention in the economy, which was largely financed by the booming oil revenues of the 1970s. Falling world oil prices in the early 1980s ushered in the fourth phase of Libya's economic development. The falling prices have dramatically reduced government revenue and caused a serious decline in economic activity.

The economic change between independence and the 1980s was dramatic. In 1951, on the eve of independence, Libya, underdeveloped and backward, was characterized by the United Nations (UN) as perhaps the world's poorest country. Experts predicted that the country would have to be supported for years by international grants-in-aid while it organized itself to try to live within its own meager means. However, in less than 25 years, Libya had turned into a rapidly developing country with accumulated net gold and foreign-exchange reserves equivalent to upward of US$4 billion and an estimated annual income from oil revenues of between US$6 and US$8 billion. Although Libya suffered few balance-of-payments problems, it was beginning to be bothered by inflation. The country seemed to have adequate funds at its disposal, however.

For more recent information about the economy, see Facts about Libya.

At the time of independence, the Libyan economy was based mainly on agriculture, which was divided more or less evenly between field (including tree) crops and livestock products. Agriculture provided raw materials for much of the country's industrial sector, exports, and trade; employed more than 70 percent of the labor force; and contributed about 30 percent of the GDP, dependent on climatic conditions.

For the most part, agricultural resources were limited to two comparatively narrow stretches along the Mediterranean Sea and a few desert oases. The cropland had been maltreated, and the pasture had been overgrazed. Erosion was common, production methods were primitive, and close to a quarter of the agricultural area was held on a tribal basis and was being used inefficiently. Rainfall was unpredictable, except that usually it was scarce and ill-timed. When the rains did come, however, they were likely to be excessive. Groundwater was in short supply in the agricultural areas. In some locations it had been so excessively drawn upon that it had become brackish or saline and was no longer suitable even for agriculture. Because the country has no perennial rivers, there was only limited potential for irrigation and even less for hydroelectric power. At the time of independence, the apparently abundant subterranean water supplies located in the Lower Sahara had
not yet been discovered. Even if officials had known about the water, its presence, while encouraging, would not have been very helpful in the short term because of lack of development funds and inadequate transport and storage facilities. In 1986, although agriculture contributed a very small share to the GDP, it still provided employment opportunities for a large portion of the population and was therefore still important. Shortage of water was the main drawback to expansion of cultivable land, but reclamation and irrigation schemes and the introduction of modern farming techniques held promise for the future.

At the time of independence, Libya possessed few minerals in quantities sufficient for commercial use, although iron ore was subsequently found in the Wadi ash Shati in the south-central part of the country. In turn, because of the absence of coal and hydroelectric power, the country had little energy potential. In the modern sense, Libya had practically no industry and, given the limitations of the agricultural sector, could produce few exports to be exchanged for the import commodities the country needed.

At independence, illiteracy was widespread, the level of skills was low, and technical and management expertise and organization were at a premium. (The lack of sufficient numbers of skilled Libyans in the labor force remained a problem in the 1980s; despite large sums of money having been spent on training Libyans, the government still relied on foreign workers.) A large part of the national life was lived under nomadic or seminomadic, rather than settled, conditions. The high birthrate added to the country's poverty. The rapid population increase strained the agricultural economy and resulted in the drift of excess unskilled laborers to urban centers, but these centers, too, lacked sufficient adequately paid employment.

In terms of resources, including human resources, the outlook at independence was bleak. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, international and other foreign agencies--mainly the United States and Italy--continued to finance the gap between Libya's needs and its domestic resources. The foreign community was not in a position, however, to undertake an across-the-board and sustained development program to set the economy on a course of immediate self-sufficiency. During much of a 1950s, the country's administrative apparatus was unable even to utilize all the resources made available from abroad.

During the decade after the discovery of petroleum, Libya became a classic example of the dual economy, in which two separate economies (petroleum and nonpetroleum) operated side by side. For practical purposes, no connection existed between them except that the petroleum companies employed limited quantities of local labor and paid a portion of their profits to the government in royalties and taxes. The financing and decisions affecting the activities of the petroleum economy came not from the domestic nonpetroleum economy but rather from outside the country. Although this sharp dichotomy was in the process of relaxation after 1965--perhaps especially after 1967--it appears not to have been attacked conceptually, at least not with fervor, until after the 1969
change of government.

The laissez-faire arrangement came to an end with the military coup d'état of September 1, 1969. The previous government's personnel and much of its administrative framework were scrapped, and the oil companies were put on notice that they were overdue on large payments for unpaid taxes and royalties. In other respects affecting the economy, the new government marked time, except for its policy of "Libyanization"--the process of replacing foreigners and foreign-owned firms in trade, government, and related activities with Libyan citizens and firms. In mid-1970, the government embarked on a program of progressive nationalization.

In addition to establishing at least a temporary veto power over the activities of the oil companies, the nationalization program included sequestration of all Italian assets, socialization (state ownership) of the banking and insurance system, Libyanization of all forms of trade, and steady substitution of Libyans for foreign administrative and management personnel in resident foreign concerns--another aspect of Libyanization. In the petroleum sector, the government put a constantly increasing financial bite on the companies. By the end of 1974, the government either had nationalized companies or had become a participant in their concessions and their production and transportation facilities. The regime thus had a larger share of the profits than under the previous royalty and tax arrangements. However, despite varying degrees of nationalization of foreign oil firms, in 1987 Libya was still highly dependent on foreign companies for the expertise needed in exploitation, marketing, and management of the oil fields and installations that remained the primary basis of the country's economic activity.

After 1972 the government began supplementing its policy of nationalization with an ambitious plan to modernize the economy, modeled largely on neighboring Algeria's experience. The key component of this plan was an intensive effort to build industrial capacity, placing a special emphasis on petroleum-related industry. The industrialization program had two major goals: the diversification of income sources and import substitution. In this latter respect, the plan met with some success, as several categories of imports began to decline in the late 1970s.

In 1981, when oil prices started to fall and the worldwide oil market entered a period of glut, the present phase of independent Libya's economic history began. The decline in oil prices has had a tremendous effect on the Libyan economy. By 1985 Libyan oil revenues had fallen to their lowest level since the first Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) price shock in 1973. This fall in oil revenues, which constituted over 57 percent of the total GDP in 1980 and from which, in some years, the government had derived over 80 percent of its revenue, caused a sharp contraction in the Libyan economy. Real GDP fell by over 14 percent between 1980 and 1981 and was continuing to decline in late 1986. The negative trend in real GDP growth was not expected to
The decline in real GDP placed great strain on government spending, reduced the level of imported goods available in Libyan markets, and increased Libya's debt repayment problems—all of which combined to lower living standards. The decline in oil revenues also caused the Libyan government to revise its somewhat haphazard way of making economic policy decisions, because it no longer possessed the financial resources to achieve its many goals. Thus, during the early and mid-1980s, development projects were subjected to a more rigorous cost and benefit analysis than during the easy money time of the 1970s. As of 1987, however, it was too early to judge the effectiveness of the government's response to falling oil revenues.

Mainly because of Libya's strategic role in World War II, the Libyan government had come to depend on foreign patrons for its financial needs. During the Italian occupation and in the immediate postwar period, first Italian and then United States and British grants kept the Libyan administration solvent. After 1956 the need for direct foreign subsidies declined as the international oil companies began to invest heavily in Libya—causing substantial capital inflows. During the 1960s, the investments of the previous decade began to pay off, and the country experienced the fruits of rising oil wealth. This trend not only reduced the government's need for foreign assistance, but also generated a huge increase in taxable domestic income. However, Libyan physical and human resource development continued to lag, necessitating sustained reliance on foreign technical assistance. This pattern of dependence on foreigners to perform crucial skilled functions, which subsequent governments have been unable to eliminate, has made Libyans acutely aware of their subordinate status in the world economy in relation to the industrialized West.

Consequently, the Qadhafi government has assigned high priority to the achievement of what it perceives as "true economic independence." This theme has been one of Qadhafi's staple arguments and underlies much of the post-1969 revolutionary government's economic policies. Qadhafi's other principal economic objective has been to promote equity, which he equates with socialism. Because of Qadhafi's unique conception of the character of the state, his distrust of the private sector, and his abhorrence of the profit motive, he has maintained that it is only through massive state intervention that economic independence and equity can be attained. Thus, the state has taken control of virtually all economic domains since Qadhafi came to power.

Soon after the revolution, a major Libyanization drive was initiated, which involved the expulsion of the remaining Jewish and Italian communities and the nationalization of the country's banks, insurance, and petroleum-marketing companies. Other measures were enacted to
restrict the activities of foreigners in commerce and industry.

Throughout the 1970s, the government expanded its role to take control of Libya's economic resources. The public Libyan Petroleum Company (LIPETCO) was supplanted in 1970 by the National Oil Company (NOC), which became responsible for implementing policies decided upon in the Ministry of Petroleum before the latter was dissolved in March 1986. Similarly, the government exercised effective control over water rights and created a large number of state-owned enterprises to oversee Libya's basic infrastructural facilities, such as highways, communications, ports, airports, and electric power stations. Public corporations were also created to run the state airline and to import certain restricted goods. The public import company, the National Organization for Supply Commodities (NOSC), was given a monopoly over the import and sale of many basic consumer items. In 1975 the government became the sole importer and retailer of motor vehicles. The domestic marketing of certain commodities and the provision of certain services were restricted to the public sector. By 1977 these included construction materials, livestock, fertilizers, fish fodder, insecticides, insurance, banking, advertising, and publishing.

Since the late 1970s, the Libyan government has accelerated its assault on the private sector in a determined attempt to stamp out what it identified as bourgeois exploitation. This renewed effort followed the codification of Qadhafi's economic theories in the second volume of his The Green Book, published in 1978. Many of the regime's most radical economic policies began soon after that date. The first concrete manifestation of Qadhafi's new economic militancy occurred in 1978, when he outlawed rental payments for property, changing all residential tenants into instant owners. The private sector housing and real estate industry was thus eliminated, and the new owners were required to pay monthly "mortgage" payments--usually amounting to about one-third of their former rent--directly to the government; however, families making less than the equivalent of US$500 a month were exempted from this obligation.

Qadhafi initiated another major innovation in 1978 when, during a speech, he urged workers in both the public and private sectors to take control of the enterprises in which they worked by following his dictum: "partners, not wage laborers." This new idea went much further than an earlier law in 1973, which had merely instituted mandatory profit-sharing. Now workers were urged to involve themselves in the day-to-day management of the enterprises in which they worked. Within 3 months of this speech, workers in 180 enterprises had formed "workers' committees" which, in principle at least, ran these concerns.

The most ambitious of the 1978 measures, however, was the attempt to do away with all private commerce, retail as well as wholesale. In that year, the responsibilities of the NOSC were considerably enlarged because the state took over responsibility for the importation of all goods and control over all foreign exchange transactions. In theory, all private commercial transactions became illegal as the state began to open
centralized supermarkets run by local people's committees with the aim of undermining the numerous neighborhood shops that previously had catered to the daily needs of most Libyans. Eventually, there were 230 such state-run supermarkets in various parts of the country. Although no one expected such a small number of stores to replace fully the thousands of private sector merchants, state planners hoped that the stores would constitute enough of a market presence in each location to exert a downward pressure on private sector prices for competing goods.

The hostility of Qadhafi toward the private sector was based on his view of merchants as nonproductive parasites; he ignored their role as distributors. In fact, many state proclamations explicitly stated that government policy was designed to do away with the whole merchant class. One newspaper editorial emphasized that "One of the goals of these consumer centers is to cut down on the huge number of merchants who are a burden on productivity." The only type of private sector enterprises that the government did not actively seek to eliminate were small service-providing firms, which were not viewed as inherently exploitative. By 1980 it was clear that Qadhafi's assault on the private sector was not proceeding as fast as he had hoped. Even in a time of relative wealth--oil revenues were nearing their peak and the state had enough revenue to fix the prices of certain goods--the public sector was unable to satisfy demand for many consumer items. The unsatisfied demand left room for private sector activity at various levels of legality. Continuing his attack on the private sector from another angle, in 1980 Qadhafi demonetized all currency notes above one dinar (for value of the Libyan dinar (LD), see Glossary). His action was designed to encourage those holding large quantities of dinars to deposit them in the nationalized banks--thus increasing state control over private sector assets. Many individuals with large cash holdings were reluctant to deposit their savings, however, since withdrawals in excess of LD1,000 were prohibited. They also feared that large deposits could be used against them as evidence of their having engaged in illegal commercial transactions. The main result of the 1980 demonetization, therefore, was a rise in conspicuous consumption, as individuals sought to transfer their savings into material goods, and an increased demand for black market foreign exchange, as persons sought ways to export their dinars.

Most of the post-1977 economic policy innovations of the Qadhafi government were designed to inhibit the private accumulation of wealth and promote an equitable distribution of the national income. The principal vehicles for fostering economic independence in this period have been two five-year plans (1976-80 and 1981-85), which were aimed at directing investment to areas that would contribute to economic autonomy. In the 1976-80 plan, agriculture and industry received the largest share of investment, whereas the 1981-85 plan allocated more funds to industry and public works, with agriculture coming in third.

Most of the planned agricultural investment has been directed to the development of oasis agriculture and irrigation. Ambitious schemes were launched during the 1970s to use the underground fossil water resources of the Tazirbu, Sarir, and Al Kufrah oases to grow wheat and animal
fodder crops. Similarly, work has begun on the Great Man-Made River (GMMR) scheme to tap desert aquifers to bring water to the coastal agricultural areas where shrinking aquifers and rising salinity threaten to lay waste to historically productive agricultural lands.

Industrial investment has been concentrated on several large-scale projects at industrial centers along the coast. Existing industrial facilities are located at Marsa al Burayqah, Misratah, and Ras al Unuf. Further expansion of these facilities as well as the creation of new ones was a principal objective of the 1981-85 plan. Most industrial projects were designed to create downstream petrochemical employment, satisfy internal demand for processed petroleum products, and take advantage of cheap energy to build export-oriented manufacturing capacity.

The contrast in approaches between the relatively conservative development plans, with their emphasis on investment and resource mobilization, and Qadhafi's more radical "socialist" policies, which seem to sacrifice efficiency for equity, produced inherent tensions in economic policy-making. In certain respects, the pursuit of equity has hindered Libya's quest for economic independence by discouraging private sector growth.

The political climate of Libya in the mid-1980s placed numerous obstacles in the way of private sector development. The 1978 law requiring all enterprises to be run by workers' committees made effective management almost impossible. Furthermore, since workers' committees rarely accepted economic efficiency or profitability as valid objectives, many enterprises no longer had a clearly defined role in the economy. The result of such policies has been to stifle most dynamism in the private sector. Consequently, when the government needed to ensure the accomplishment of key economic tasks, which it was incapable of doing for itself, it had no choice but to turn to foreigners.

Those Libyans possessing managerial experience or engaged in performing key economic activities prior to 1978 became increasingly alienated by the subsequent directions of government policy; many even left the country. Thus, with a severely handicapped domestic private sector and few competent Libyan managers, the completion and operation of practically all key industrial projects depended on foreign expertise. Furthermore, because the post-1978 economic environment had provided little incentive for the training of Libyan managers, there was little likelihood of easily reversing the shortage of indigenous managers.

Some foreign observers have suggested that the sharp drop in oil revenues, which began in the early 1980s, may lead to a re-evaluation of many of Qadhafi's more radical socialist policies. Such reassessment could reduce some of the private sector's problems and actually contribute toward economic independence. There were some indications that this was indeed happening in the mid-1980s, as many projects of doubtful economic value were postponed.
Because of declining revenues, the government has been unable to finance much of its ambitious drive to replace the private sector. The expansion of the state-run supermarket system ended as funds grew tighter. By 1985 the stores were unable to supply most basic consumer items, thus failing to drive down private sector prices. Similarly, the government was compelled to expel many foreign workers who had been the mainstay of the economy. Between 1983 and 1987, the number of foreign workers in Libya fell drastically, going from more than 560,000 to about 200,000. This decline was achieved primarily by cutting the number of unskilled foreign laborers employed by the public sector to perform basic service tasks—jobs that many Libyans could fill. Whether the increased demand for labor in the wake of these expulsions will result in a greater Libyanization of the work force, or merely in a rise in the number of unfilled jobs will depend largely on how much the government relaxes its restrictions on private sector employment. In the mid-1980s, few public sector funds were available for hiring Libyans at the higher salaries they would require.

In 1984 industry, including the exploration, production, transport, and marketing of petroleum products (crude petroleum, natural gas, and condensates derived therefrom), contributed about 60 percent of GDP (at factor cost) and virtually 100 percent of exports. Industrial activities also occupied from 30 to 38 percent of the total labor force in 1984.

Libyan industrial development has been heavily dependent on the oil sector, both for investment revenue and for raw inputs. Throughout the 1970s, the government implemented numerous measures to increase its share of the profits from oil exploitation and marketing. By the mid-1980s, the revenue accruing to foreign oil companies engaged in lifting Libyan oil was taxed at a rate of about 95 percent.

Since the early 1960s, the petroleum industry has increasingly dominated the whole economy, although in 1984 it provided direct employment for fewer than 10,000 Libyans. The development of the oil industry was remarkable, both in terms of its rapidity and its proliferation. An exceptional combination of circumstances contributed to the development of the petroleum sector. Like Algerian oil, Libyan crude oil, while having a rather high wax content, is lighter and easier to handle than crudes from most other petroleum areas. It also has a low sulfur content, which makes it easier on internal combustion engines and less of a pollution contributant than other crudes. For this reason, Libyan crudes had a receptive market in Europe from the start; furthermore, Libya is one-third closer to European markets than the oil ports of the eastern Mediterranean. When the Suez Canal was closed by the June 1967 War, forcing tankers from Iran, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula to go around the Cape of Good Hope, the advantages of Libyan petroleum were enhanced. Moreover, the lay of the land itself, which allows the output of the wells to be piped directly and easily to dockside totally
over Libya's territory, assured steadiness of supply, which has not necessarily been the case for eastern Mediterranean pipeline outlets. In addition, Libya's petroleum development benefited from the technology and experience acquired by the industry in other parts of the petroleum world during the preceding fifty years. Thus, by 1977 Libya was the seventh largest oil producer in the world. However, Libya's position declined somewhat in the early 1980s as OPEC production quotas were cut. By 1986 Libya was only the fifteenth largest producer of crude oil.

For the petroleum industry, the military coup of 1969 did not represent a rupture of continuity; it did, however, introduce a shift in government attitudes toward the purpose and function of the foreign operating companies in line with its general nationalist-socialist political and socioeconomic orientation. It is therefore useful to visualize Libya's petroleum development in terms of two periods, dividing at September 1, 1969, with the earlier period serving to prepare for the later.

Active exploration started in 1953 after oil was discovered in neighboring Algeria. The first well was begun in 1956 in western Fezzan, and the first oil was struck in 1957. Esso (subsequently Exxon) made the first commercial strike in 1959, just as several firms were planning to give up exploration. The first oil flowed by pipeline from Esso's concession at Zaltan to its export facilities at Marsa al Burayqah in 1961. The rush was on, with other companies entering Libya and additional discoveries being made. The original major strikes were in the Sirtica Basin, one of the world's largest oil fields, southeast of the Gulf of Sidra; in 1987 this area was still the source of the bulk of Libya's output. In 1969 a major strike was made at Sarir, well to the southeast of the Sirtica Basin fields, and minor fields were located in northwestern Tripolitania. New deposits were found in the Ghadamis sedimentation basin (400 kilometers southwest of Tripoli) in 1974 and in offshore fields 30 kilometers northwest of Tripoli in 1977.

Since 1977 efforts to tap new deposits have concentrated on Libya's offshore fields. The large Bouri field was due to be brought on-stream by the NOC and AGIP (Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli), a subsidiary of the Italian state oil company consortium, in late 1987. Other offshore exploration ventures were launched following the settlement of maritime boundary disputes with Tunisia in 1982 and Malta in 1983. Libyan access to offshore deposits in these formerly disputed areas was significant, because they may contain as much as 7 billion barrels of oil.

Petroleum production in 1985 was still governed by the Petroleum Law of 1955, which was amended in 1961, 1965, and 1971. The government, through the Ministry of Petroleum, preferred to grant sizable concessions to a number of different foreign companies. To induce rapid exploitation of deposits, the typical concession contract called for progressive nationalization of Libyan operations run by foreign companies over a span of ten years, with the Libyan government's share starting as one-fourth and ending at three-fourths. The government extracted most of its compensation in the form of product sharing. When early concessions to several large companies by Esso, which was the
first to export Libyan crude in 1961, proved to be highly profitable, many independent oil companies from noncommunist countries set up similar operations in Libya. In 1969 about thirty-three companies held concessions. Concessionary terms were somewhat tightened during the 1970s, as the postrevolutionary government pursued a more active policy of nationalization. The vehicle for this policy was the revamped state NOC, which, as noted, was formed in 1970 from LIPETCO. In July 1970, NOC’s jurisdiction was expanded by legislation that nationalized the foreign-owned Esso, Shell, and Ente Nazionale Idrocarbuno (ENI) marketing subsidiaries, and a small local company, Petro Libya, and transferred their operations to NOC. These operations included managing companies in the importing, distributing, and selling of refined petroleum products at subsidized prices in Libya. In 1971 the companies were merged into a single countrywide marketing enterprise called the Brega Company, which also marketed oil and gas abroad for the government.

The new government's nationalization campaign commenced in December 1971, when it nationalized the British Petroleum share of the British Petroleum-Bunker Hunt Sarir field in retaliation for the British government's failure to intervene to prevent Iran from taking possession of three small islands in the Persian Gulf belonging to the United Arab Emirates. It was not until late 1974 that a compensation agreement was reached between British Petroleum and the Libyan government over the settlement of these nationalized assets. In December 1972, Libya moved against British Petroleum's former partner Bunker Hunt and demanded a 50-percent participation in its operations. When Bunker Hunt refused, its assets were nationalized in June 1973 and turned over to one of NOC's subsidiaries, as had been done earlier with British Petroleum's assets.

In late 1972, a 50-percent participation had been agreed upon with the Italian joint company, ENI-AGIP, and in early 1973 talks began with the Occidental Petroleum Corporation and with the Oasis group. Occidental, accounting for about 15 percent of total production, was one of the major independent producers. In July 1973, it agreed to NOC's purchase of 51 percent of its assets. The Oasis group, another major producer, was one-third owned by the Continental Oil Company, one-third by Marathon Petroleum, and one-sixth each by Amerada Petroleum Company and Shell. The Oasis group agreed to Libyan 51-percent participation in August 1973. On September 1, 1973, Libya unilaterally announced that it was taking over 51 percent of the remaining oil companies, except for a few small operators.

Several foreign oil companies balked at the Libyan proposal but soon found that the government's policy was firm: agree to Libyan participation or face nationalization. Shell refused to accept Libyan participation in its share of the Oasis group, and its operations were nationalized in March 1974. A month earlier, three other reluctant oil companies had been nationalized: Texaco, the California Asiatic Company, and the Libyan-American Oil Company. They finally received compensation for their assets in 1977.
Political events of the 1980s convinced many American-owned companies of the advisability of selling off their Libyan operations. In 1981 Exxon withdrew from Libya, pulling out its long-standing subsidiary operations. Mobil followed suit in 1982, when it withdrew from its operations in the Ras al Unuf system. These withdrawals gave NOC an even greater share in the overall oil industry. Another round of advancing nationalization was made possible in 1986, when United States President Ronald Reagan announced on January 7 his intention to require American companies to divest from their operations in Libya. It was unclear at that time, however, whether the five companies involved would sell their shares to NOC (probably at a substantial loss), or merely transfer them to European subsidiaries not affected by the president's sanctions. According to the latest estimates available in early 1987, NOC's share of the total equity in Libyan petroleum operations stood at 70 percent, with two operating subsidiaries and at least a 50-percent share in each major private concession.

Although NOC nominally had been under control of the Ministry of Petroleum, foreign observers were uncertain what real control the ministry had over the NOC. The ministry's dissolution in March 1986 produced little comment, which seemed to indicate that NOC was the principal instrument of government policy in the oil sector and controlled about two-thirds of Libya's total oil production.

Since 1974 no new concessions have been granted, although the Libyan government has negotiated production-sharing agreements with existing concession holders to induce them to search for new deposits, particularly in the offshore region bordering Tunisia where the large Bouri field is located. These agreements have called for NOC to receive 81 percent of production if the discovery is offshore and 85 percent if it is onshore.

Libyan price policy has largely been settled in meetings of OPEC, which it joined in 1962. Both the prerevolutionary and postrevolutionary governments have remained committed to OPEC as an instrument for maximizing their total oil revenues. Petroleum production (almost all of which was exported) declined during the first half of the 1970s, as a result of both the OPEC and Libyan policy of cutting production to influence price. During the late 1970s, production rose slightly, only to fall again in the 1980s when OPEC reduced its members' production quotas in an attempt to halt the oil price slide. In March 1983, Libya accepted its OPEC quota of 1.1 million barrels per day (bpd). This figure was revised downward again in November 1984, when it was set at 990,000 bpd. Libyan oil production in 1986 averaged 1,137 thousand bpd, having regained the same production it had in 1981. Generally, Libya has adhered to its OPEC quota.

In 1986 Libyan oil fields were served by a complicated network of oil pipelines leading to the five principal export terminals at Marsa al Burayqah, As Sidra, Ras al Unuf, Marsa al Hariqah, and Az Zuwaytinah. The Sidra terminal exported the largest volume of oil, about 30 percent of the total in 1981. A future sixth terminal was planned at Zuwarah in
western Libya. Pipelines to these terminals served more than one company, thus mixing different oil blends that were standardized for export. The share that an individual company received from exports was determined by the amount and quality of the oil that entered the common pipeline. The share of the oil belonging to NOC was either sold directly on the open market or sold back to its producing partner. Libyan refining capacity increased dramatically in 1985, when the export refinery at Ras al Unuf came on stream with a 220,000-bpd capacity. Other refineries existed at Tobruk (20,000 bpd), Marsa al Burayqah (11,000 bpd), and Az Zawiyah (116,000 bpd), giving Libya an overall refining capacity in 1985 of 367,000 bdp.

Production of natural gas in Libya received a major boost in 1971, when a law was passed requiring the oil companies to store and liquify the natural gas condensate from their wells, rather than burning it off as many had previously done. However, natural gas production has lagged far behind oil because the high costs of transport and liquefaction have made it a less attractive alternative. A large liquefaction plant was built at Marsa al Burayqah in 1968, but its export performance has been spotty. About 70 percent of Libya's natural gas production is consumed domestically. Production stood at 12.35 billion cubic meters in 1984, down from 20.38 billion cubic meters in 1980. Total reserves of natural gas were estimated at 600 billion cubic meters in 1985.

According to information available in 1987, Libya's commercially usable mineral resources—apart from its hydrocarbons—were limited to a large iron-ore deposit in the Wadi ash Shati near Sabha in Fezzan, and scattered, deposits of gypsum, limestone, cement rock, salt, and building stone. There also were small, widely scattered and currently noncommercial deposits of phosphate rock, manganese, barite-celestite, sodium carbonate, sulfur, and alum. Although much of the country had been photographed by the petroleum companies and large portions of it had been mapped by the Italians, by British and American military personnel, and by the United States Geological Survey (from 1954 to 1962) in search of water and minerals, the country is so large that in early 1987 much of it still had not been mapped at scales suitable for definitive mineral inventory.

The Wadi ash Shati iron-ore deposit is apparently one of the largest in the world. Suitable in considerable part for strip mining, it outcrops in or underlies roughly eighty square kilometers of the valley. According to information in the mid-1980s, none of it was high-grade ore. Preliminary estimates suggest that the amount of 30 to 40 percent iron-content ore in the deposits totals anywhere between 700 million and 2 billion tons. Because of the distances and technical problems involved, profitable exploitation of the deposits would depend on the construction of a proposed railroad to the coast. Development of the deposits would allow Libya self-sufficiency in iron and steel, although probably at costs appreciably above those available on an import basis. In 1974 a state-owned company, the General Iron and Steel Corporation, was formed to exploit the deposits. The government hoped that the planned iron and steel manufacturing plant at Misratah, scheduled for completion in 1986,
eventually would be able to exploit the Wadi ash Shati deposits. But the commercial viability of using these deposits was not assumed, since initial plans called for the Misratah works to be fed with imported iron-ore pellets.

Other scattered iron ore deposits in northwestern Tripolitania and northern Fezzan were apparently insufficient to be commercially exploitable under current conditions. Manganese was known to occur in northwestern Tripolitania and, in combination with the iron-ore deposits, at several locations in the Wadi ash Shati. Known deposits, however, were not considered commercially exploitable.

Salt flats, formed by evaporation at lagoonal deposits near the coast and in closed depressions in the desert interior, are widely scattered through the northern part of the country. In some cases, especially along the Gulf of Sidra, they cover large areas. In the 1980s, about 11,000 tons of salt were produced annually. Evidences of sulfur have been reported at scattered points in the salt flats of the Sirtica Basin and in various parts of Fezzan; sulfur occurs in pure form in Fezzan and is associated with sulfur springs in the Sirtica Basin.

Sodium carbonate (trona) is formed as a crust at the edges and bottoms of a number of dry lakes in Fezzan. Traditionally, about 100 metric tons a year were harvested and sent to market at Sabha. Because sodium carbonate is used in petroleum refining, as well as traditionally in soapmaking and water refining, production may be increased as part of the government's development effort in Fezzan.

Because of the government's interest in social welfare and its financial ability to support it, construction is bound to be a major area of future economic development. Except for wood, the raw materials needed for construction--stone, gravel, clay, limestone, gypsum, and cheap fuel--are found in abundant quantities and suitable commercial qualities adjacent to the major population and production centers in both northern Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. In 1986 plans were announced for a new gypsum mine with a planned output of 200,000 to 300,000 tons a year. Several thousand tons of gypsum are mined annually and indicated reserves of gypsum total about 200 million tons.

Growth in Libyan industrial capacity began in force only after 1969. Earlier manufacturing efforts concentrated primarily on processing domestic crops and livestock products and on handicraft products. Before the revolution, 90 percent of Libya's manufacturing establishments were located in Benghazi or Tripoli, and 75 to 80 percent of these were owned by Italians. Nearly 90 percent of the manufacturing establishments were private, and most employed fewer than 20 workers.

This situation started to change after 1969. After marking time for
almost a year, the new government opted for a restricted industrial policy resembling the policies of Egypt and Algeria. In the late 1970s, the industrial sector (including manufacturing) was planned by the government, which had assumed control over those aspects of industrial production that were deemed sensitive or too large for the domestic private sector. The new policy leaned heavily on freeing industry, including manufacturing, from dependence on foreign ownership or control. In what appeared to be in part at least a function of its new policy, the government required local companies that engaged in trade to be Libyan and nationalized the properties of Italians, who represented the bulk of the country's entrepreneurship and private sector.

Before 1980 the government concentrated on developing light processing and petrochemical industries. Processing of foodstuffs continued to remain a high priority, and the largest number of plants built during the 1970s were in this area. Other major manufacturing projects during the decade included textile complexes, a new oil refinery, two petrochemical plants, a fertilizer factory, and an electrical cable plant. Gains in value added from manufacturing over this period were impressive. In constant 1980 dollars, value added in manufacturing rose from US$196 million to US$760 million in 1983. Still, in terms of contribution to GDP, in 1983 manufacturing contributed only 4 percent of the total. In that year, an estimated 80,500 people worked in the manufacturing sector, about 7 percent of the total labor force. Light industries--mainly food processing--continued to comprise the largest share of total manufacturing capacity by the early 1980s.

Encouraging the development of heavy industry became a high priority for the government in the 1980s. The 1981-85 development plan called for the allocation of LD2.725 billion to heavy industry--15 percent of the total development plan allocation and second only to agriculture at 17 percent. However, as indicated earlier, because expenditure under the development budget was highly dependent on oil revenues, actual expenditures often failed to reach planned levels. Thus, the government's drive to build heavy industrial capacity in the 1980s has been hampered by declining revenues, and many projects were running behind schedule.

Key heavy industrial developments under construction in the 1981-85 plan included an expansion of the ammonium/urea plant at Marsa al Burayqah, a new ethylene unit at Ras al Unuf, and the large iron and steel complex at Misratah. The Ras al Unuf ethylene plant was completed in 1986, and the other two projects were nearing completion in early 1987.

Projects in the early stages of development in 1987 included a fertilizer complex at Surt, an aluminum smelter and coke plant at Zuwarah, and a further expansion of the Ras al Unuf petrochemical plant. However, all these projects were in serious jeopardy, as a result of the 1986 decline in oil prices, and Libyan planners were re-evaluating the impact of industrial projects on the balance of payments.

During the period of high oil prices before 1981, the development of
import-dependent heavy industry seemed feasible. Libya enjoyed cheap energy costs in comparison to Europe and possessed the foreign exchange to pay for raw material imports. The 1980s decline in oil prices has reduced Libya's advantage in terms of energy costs and greatly cut into its supply of foreign exchange. Whereas in 1979 it may have been possible for the government both to import industrial raw materials and subsidize food imports, by 1987 it was becoming increasingly clear that the available foreign exchange was insufficient to accommodate both programs.

This problem was obvious in existing industry during the mid-1980s, when production and productive capacity ratios for selected manufacturers varied substantially from year to year, depending on whether imported raw materials were available. To cite a dramatic example, in 1983 Libya had a productive capacity of 18,000 washing machine units but produced only 4,533. As a result of cutbacks in foreign exchange allocations in 1984, only 289 machines were produced (productive capacity remained unchanged); thus, used capacity decreased from about 25 percent to under 2 percent.

Used capacity in other manufacturing industries varied widely. In 1984 oil refining operated at 36 percent of capacity, methanol production at 84 percent, ammonia at 91 percent, and tractor production at 67 percent. The country's unused manufacturing capacity could be traced not only to the scarcity of foreign exchange but also to Libya's general shortage of labor.

The construction industry has played a prominent role in economic development, as one would expect in a country largely devoid of infrastructure before the mid-1960s. The construction industry got its start as a result of foreign oil company investment during the 1960s, but since 1969 it has grown in accordance with the government construction projects called for in the successive five-year plans.

In 1975 the government began to reorganize the construction industry to make it more efficient. At that time, there were about 2,000 contractors, many of them small proprietorships or partnerships. The minister of housing was given the authority to merge contracting firms into a smaller number of larger firms capable of carrying out large construction projects. Firms with capital in excess of LD30,000 were converted into corporations, and the majority shares were sold to the public or the government. Previously, the government had set up several state-owned construction companies to build factories and to carry out civil engineering projects. Among the firms were the National Industrial Contracting Company, the General Corporation for the Construction and Maintenance of Roads, and the General Corporation for Civil Works.

The many government-sponsored construction projects of the 1970s created a booming industry, so much so that by the end of the decade Libya had become the world's leading per capita consumer of cement. This was a significant economic achievement, particularly because the 1978 housing law effectively had eliminated private residential
construction. In 1986 construction supplied about 11 percent of GDP, second only to public services in the nonpetroleum sector.

The construction industry, however, was damaged more than any other sector by the severe cutback in the number of foreign workers in Libya in the mid-1980s. Between mid-1983 and mid-1984, the number of construction workers dropped from 371,000 to 197,000, mainly because of the departure of foreign workers. Nonetheless, construction remained the number one employer during 1984.

The cutbacks in development spending, together with the foreign worker exodus, led to a decline in overall construction. As an illustration, in 1985 the cement industry, which had been expanded during the building boom, was capable of producing 6 million tons a year, but domestic demand had dwindled to only 4.5 million tons.

In addition to the construction decline, there has been a rapid decline in another economic area, that of traditional handicrafts. Rural artisans have taken up more lucrative employment, and utilitarian handmade products have been replaced by factory-made goods. In an effort to provide continuous employment for those artisans who desire to continue their trades, the government has set up several training centers and provided subsidies for raw materials. Most artisan production is purchased by the government for resale or export. The more popular craft items are carpets, pottery, leather goods, fabrics, and copperware.

The history of Libya's agricultural development has been closely related, although inversely, to the development of its oil industry. In 1958, before the era of oil wealth, agriculture supplied over 26 percent of GDP, and Libya actually exported food. Although gross levels of agricultural production have remained relatively constant, increasing oil revenues have resulted in a decline in agriculture's overall share of national income. Thus, by 1962 agriculture was only responsible for 9 percent of GDP, and by 1978 this figure had tumbled to a mere 2 percent. Even more striking than the downward trend in agriculture's share of GDP was the rise in food imports. In 1977 the value of food imports was more than 37 times greater than it had been in 1958. Therefore, a large part of the rising oil wealth between 1960 and 1979 was spent on imported food products.

To some extent, these trends were neither surprising nor disturbing. Libya's comparatively strong agricultural position in 1958 masked an even greater level of general poverty. Agriculture during the 1950s was characterized by low levels of productivity and income. The advent of oil wealth provided many peasants with opportunities to engage in less exacting and more remunerative work in the urban areas, resulting in a huge rural migration to the cities. In addition, Libya is not well endowed with agricultural resources; over 94 percent of the land consists of
agriculturally useless wasteland. The large number of people engaged in agriculture prior to 1960 reflected, therefore, not a thriving agricultural economy but merely the absence of attractive alternatives.

The number of peasants who gave up farming to look for jobs in the oil industry and in urban areas rose dramatically throughout the 1955-62 period. Another adverse effect on agricultural production occurred during the 1961-63 period, when the government offered its citizens long-term loans to purchase land from Italian settlers. This encouraged urban dwellers to purchase rural lands for recreational purposes rather than as productive farms, thereby inflating land values and contributing to a decline in production.

Since 1962 Libyan governments have paid more attention to agricultural development. The government has given inducements to absentee landlords to encourage them to put their lands to productive use and initiated high agricultural wage policies to stem the rural-to-urban flow of labor. These policies met with some success. Production levels began to rise slightly, and many foreign workers were attracted to the agricultural sector. Agricultural development became the cornerstone of the 1981-85 development plan, which attached high priority to funding the GMMR project, designed to bring water from the large desert oasis aquifers of Sarir and Al Kufrah. Agricultural credit was provided by the National Agricultural Bank, which in 1981 made almost 10,000 loans to farmers at an average of nearly LD1,500 each. The substantial amounts of funds made available by this bank may have been a major reason why so many Libyans--nearly 20 percent of the labor force in 1984--chose to remain in the agricultural sector.

Despite the greater attention to agriculture, however, in 1984 this sector only accounted for about 3.5 percent of GDP, and Libya still imported over 1 million metric tons of cereals (up from 612,000 metric tons in 1974). Also in 1984, the average index of food production per capita indicated a decline of 6 percent from the period 1974 to 1976. On the average, about 70 percent of Libya's food needs were met by imports during the mid-1980s.

**Land Use and Irrigation**

**Crops and Livestock**

**Fishing and Forestry**

Although statistics vary, only a very small percentage of Libyan land is arable--probably under 2 percent of total land area. About 4 percent is suitable for grazing livestock and the rest is agriculturally useless desert. Most arable land lies in two places: the Jabal al Akhdar region around Benghazi, and the Jifarah Plain near Tripoli. The highest parts of the Jabal al Akhdar receive between 400 and 600 millimeters of rain annually, whereas the immediately adjacent area, sloping north to the
Marj Plain, receives between 200 and 400 millimeters. The central and eastern parts of the Jifarash Plain and the nearby Jabal Nafusah also average between 200 and 400 millimeters of rain annually. The remaining Libyan coastal strip and the areas just to the south of the sectors described average 100 to 200 millimeters of rain yearly. In addition, the Jifarah Plain is endowed with an underground aquifer that has made intensive well-driven irrigation possible. Between these two areas and for a distance of about 50 kilometers south, there is a narrow strip of land that has enough scrub vegetation to support livestock. Desert predominates south of this strip, with only occasional oasis cultivation, such as at Al Kufrah, Sabha, and Marzuq.

Studies published in the late 1970s indicated that at any given time, about one-third of the total arable land remained fallow and that as many as 45 percent of the farms were under 10 hectares. The average farm size was about 11 hectares, although many were fragmented into small, noncontiguous plots. Most farms in the Jifarah Plain were irrigated by individual wells and electric pumps, although in 1985 only about 1 percent of the arable land was irrigated.

Since coming to power in 1969, the Qadhafi government has been very concerned with land reform. Shortly after the revolution, the government confiscated all Italian-owned farms (about 38,000 hectares) and redistributed much of this land in smaller plots to Libyans. The state retained some of the confiscated lands for state farming ventures, but in general the government has not sought to eliminate the private sector from agriculture as it has with commerce. It did, however, take the further step in 1971 of declaring all uncultivated land to be state property. This measure was aimed mainly at certain powerful conservative tribal groups in the Jabal al Akhdar, who had laid claim to large tracts of land. Another law passed in 1977 placed further restriction on tribal systems of land ownership, emphasizing actual use as the deciding factor in determining land ownership. Since 1977 an individual family has been allotted only enough land to satisfy its own requirements; this policy was designed to prevent the development of large-scale private sector farms and to end the practice of using fertile "tribal" lands for grazing rather than cultivation.

Partly as a result of these policies as well as the dictates of Islamic rules of inheritance, which stipulate that each son should receive an equal share of family land upon the father's death, in 1986 Libyan farms tended to be fragmented and too small to make efficient use of water. This problem was especially severe in the long-settled Jifarah Plain, which has been Libya's single most productive agricultural region.

The falling water tables in Libya's best agricultural lands caused by overirrigation posed a severe long-term ecological threat to agriculture. The government began to recognize this in 1976, and took measures to discourage citrus and tomato cultivation, both of which required large amounts of water. However, the more stringent steps required to save the coastal water resources--principally the regulation of irrigation and changing the land tenure system to make it more water-efficient--
conflicted with Qadhafi's concept of economic equity, which favored intensive irrigated cultivation of small plots for family use.

The government's overall strategy for dealing with the impending ecological crisis has not been to reform the practices that brought it about. Rather, the cornerstone of agricultural policy since 1983 has been to avert disaster by pumping large quantities of water to the coast from the fossil reserves of the southern desert. This project, the GMMR, was expected to cost US$5 billion for the first two stages and has largely been spared from the cuts in development spending that have delayed many other projects in the 1980s.

The first phase of the GMMR, on which construction began in 1984, called for the construction of a 1,895-kilometer pipeline to carry water from the Sarir and Tazirbu regions to a holding tank at Ajdabiya. From there the water will be pumped to Surt and Benghazi for both agricultural and urban consumption. Planners anticipated a total cost of about US$3.29 billion for this first phase and a completion date sometime in 1989. The first stage is projected to irrigate an area of 20,000 hectares for vegetables, and 50,000 hectares for cereals, and to enable the raising of some 100 head of cattle. A second stage will connect the fossil reserves at Al Kufrah to the system. It will also extend the pipelines from Ajdabiya to Tobruk. Planning for a possible third stage, which would link Tripoli to the underground reserves of the western Fezzan region, and would extend the western coastal terminus from Surt to Tripoli was also under way in 1987.

After completion of the second stage, the GMMR will be capable of delivering up to 5 million cubic meters of water a day. According to estimates, this amount would be sufficient to irrigate 180,000 hectares in the Surt area, to provide pasture for 2 million sheep and 200,000 cattle, and to supply industrial and domestic needs in Benghazi and Tripoli. According to the project's American designers, the Al Kufrah and Sarir aquifers could sustain pumping at this rate for 50 to 100 years without depletion.

Despite planners' optimistic predictions about the benefits of the GMMR, foreign observers doubt that it will resolve the difficulties facing agriculture. Whatever the size of the desert aquifers, they are finite fossil reserves and will not last indefinitely. Furthermore, the major agricultural developments planned for the Surt region will do nothing to stop the declining levels of productivity in the Jifarah Plain. In fact, the choice of Surt as a site for massive agricultural development may have been prompted more by Qadhafi's family roots being there than its suitability for intensive agricultural development. In addition, urban and industrial demand for water from the south is likely to increase as the population continues to grow and as various industrial projects begin operations.

The GMMR's long-term impact on oasis cultivation in the south is also likely to be negative. Many of Libya's showcase agricultural projects are located in the southern oases that depend on the fossil aquifers that the
GMMR will tap. Developments at Al Kufrah and Sarir have used advanced irrigation technology to grow wheat and fodder crops. The depletion of the fossil reserves on which these projects depend means that they have little long-term viability. Given the extremely high cost and low yields achieved as of the early 1980s, a re-evaluation of the economic viability of these projects may well occur.

In the 1980s, statistics on Libyan agricultural production continued to vary widely. For example, figures compiled by the Central Bank of Libya generally exceeded those published by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization by 10 to 100 percent. During the 1980s, wheat and barley were the principal cereal crops, although millet was also grown in the southern oases. Both crops were cultivated throughout the country, in the coastal regions as well as in the desert oases. The optimum yield for wheat cultivation in Libya was thought to be about 5 tons per hectare, but by the mid-1980s yields were only averaging about 0.5 ton per hectare. Citrus production declined to insignificant levels following the government's water conservation measures of 1976. Other important crops were dates, olives, melons, onions, and potatoes. Vegetables were grown in specialized farms near Tripoli. Tree crops remained popular because many farmers combined olive, date, apple, or almond raising with cereal production.

In the 1980s, livestock represented the largest income-producing item in agricultural production, and the government has instituted numerous measures designed to make the country self-sufficient in meat, poultry, and dairy products. The numbers of sheep, cattle, and poultry were slowly increasing, while the herds of goats and camels were decreasing. Sheep constituted the largest percentage of livestock, numbering some 6.3 million head in 1985. Sheep and goats were used for meat, milk, and wool and were found all over the country. The largest flocks were in the Al Kufrah settlement project. Modern range-management practices and techniques were being used to prevent overgrazing of the land and to make optimal use of the pastures. Thousands of hectares of pastureland had been fenced along the coastal regions for use as cattle breeding stations as well as livestock-fattening pens.

Until the 1970s, cattle were used mainly for transport. During the 1970s, the number of cattle--particularly dairy cattle-- increased, as did milk and meat production. By 1985 there were nearly 209,000 head of cattle in the country, and several fodder plants were in various stages of completion as part of an effort to achieve self-sufficiency in animal feedstuffs. The General Dairy and Dairy Products Company was created in 1974 to take over most private dairies and to produce and market all dairy products. Private dairy farms were permitted to operate, but their milk had to be sold to the state company. The government also entered the poultry business on a large scale, and independent farmers found it
difficult to compete against the large government poultry farms.

Although Libya possesses nearly 1,800 kilometers of coastline and the second largest continental shelf in the Mediterranean, its waters are not particularly rich in the plankton needed to sustain highly productive fishing waters. In 1977 Libya's fishing catch stood at 4,803 tons. By 1981 it had risen to 6,418 tons--still one of the smaller national catches in the Mediterranean. Most of Libya's fishing fleet was located on the western half of its coastline, especially around Tripoli, because the country's eastern and central coasts possessed less attractive fishing grounds. Estimates in 1979 put the number of fishing boats at 325, of which 13 were trawlers; the rest were small and medium-sized boats. Approximately 1,000 to 1,200 people were thought to be professional fishermen in 1981. The government has been encouraging fishing activities and attempting to stimulate a demand for fish. In 1986 a new fishing port was under construction at Zuwarah, and numerous ice plants have been built at several coastal sites. Agreements for joint development of fishing have been signed with several countries, including Tunisia and Spain.

Sponge fishing has been monopolized by Greek fishermen who have been licensed by the Libyan government. A tiny percentage of the harvest has been obtained by Libyans using small boats and skindiving equipment from the shallow waters inshore. The Greeks have used modern equipment to exploit the deepwater beds where the best sponges lie. In an experiment begun in 1977, the government has established freshwater fish farms in several inshore locations.

For commercial purposes, the country has no forests. Although the government designated more than 62,400 hectares as woodland or forest, of this land is covered with scrub and minor vegetation.

During the 1960s, the government actively pursued an afforestation program; these activities were accelerated in the 1970s. An estimated 213 million seedlings had been planted by 1977, about 33 million of which were fruit trees. Most of the reforestation has been in western Libya. During reforestation efforts, scientists have experimented with a petrochemical spray that is sufficiently porous to allow the occasional rain to trickle and seep through, yet sturdy enough to prevent the seedling from being blown away during one of the country's frequent and severe sandstorms. The government's long-term goals for the massive planting program include the growth of enough trees to meet its domestic lumber needs, which in the past had been met by imports. Short-term goals include soil conservation and reclamation, and the creation of windbreaks for crops and settlements.
Sweeping and fundamental changes were introduced in Libya after Colonel Muammar al Qadhafi and his Free Officers Movement overthrew the Sanusi monarchy on September 1, 1969, and proclaimed the "Green Revolution." Because of the many radical and experimental policies that Qadhafi has tried to implement in Libya, he has been described frequently as a mercurial and quixotic leader. But while Qadhafi's policy making has been unpredictable, it has not been random or capricious. Rather, Qadhafi's political behavior has been dictated by his own elaborate and evolving normative political ideology, which he set forth in his three-volume *The Green Book*.

The essence of Qadhafi's philosophy is the Third Universal Theory, so-called because it is intended to be an alternative to capitalism and Marxism. The theory calls for the institution in Libya of what Qadhafi calls "direct democracy." In a direct democracy, as envisaged by Qadhafi, citizens govern themselves through grass-roots activism without the mediation or intervention of state institutions or other organizational hierarchies in the military, tribes, ulama, or intelligentsia. In an effort to implement direct democracy, Qadhafi altered or dismantled governmental and social structures. He launched a Cultural Revolution in 1973, instituted "people's power" in 1975, and proclaimed that Libya was a "state of the masses" in 1977. Finally, to emphasize his policy of decentralization, Qadhafi relinquished his own formal governmental position in 1979 and insisted he be referred to simply as "Leader of the Revolution."

The striking innovation in the Libyan political system since Qadhafi came to power resulted from his desire to replace subnational traditional leaders with administrators with the skills needed to modernize the country. The changes were also ostensibly intended to foster egalitarianism, mass mobilization, revolutionary commitment, public participation, and self-determination among Libyan citizens. From a pragmatic perspective, however, the changes served primarily to undermine the authority of traditional or alternate elite groups that posed a potential challenge to Qadhafi's leadership.

It is ironic, then, that the changes intended to enfranchise the citizenry have instead served primarily to bolster Qadhafi's personal power by diminishing governmental checks and balances on his executive power and eliminating all other power bases. In 1987 there was little doubt that Qadhafi remained the country's strongman, the fulcrum of power, and the single most important figure in Libya.

Although Qadhafi in theory advocated dismantling the structure of government, in reality Libya in 1987 had an elaborate and complex bureaucratic structure because the new organizations Qadhafi created had been superimposed upon existing institutions. In 1987 the primary formal instrument of government was the General People's Congress (GPC), both an executive and legislative body, which convened three
times annually. The GPC was headed by a small General Secretariat composed primarily of members of the former Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which was abolished in 1977. A General People's Committee performed the function of a cabinet, replacing the old Council of Ministers. Subnational representation and participation were accomplished through three roughly parallel and overlapping structures: people's committees that were organized at the basic (urban ward or rural village) and municipal levels, Arab Socialist Union (ASU), the only authorized political mass organization; Basic Popular Congress (BPC); and revolutionary committees organized both geographically and functionally. The lines of authority and responsibility among these four bodies were unclear, which occasionally caused intense competition and rivalry within the government. Moreover, in 1987 there were indications that Qadhafi intended to introduce a fifth similar organizational structure in the form of a new political party.

On the international level, Libya sought to foster pan-Arabism and Islamic and Third World solidarity. Initially, Libya advocated positive neutrality, but for pragmatic reasons, soon gravitated toward a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Concurrently, Libya's interpretation of the North-South dimension of global politics emphasized the division between industrialized, resource-consuming nations and underdeveloped resource producers, a division that, in Qadhafi's view, overshadowed the East-West dichotomy. Libya under Qadhafi played a leading role in the efforts among producing countries to gain full control of petroleum production and to use that production for internal development and as a political weapon with which to reward friendly nations and punish opponents.

Qadhafi is hostile toward the United States and other Western countries because these countries generally support Israel. Because of its anti-Western stance, the Libyan regime gained a reputation for conducting unconventional, belligerent, and aggressive foreign relations. There were frequent and widespread allegations that Libya sponsored transnational terrorist activities, supported dozens of insurrectionary movements worldwide, and assassinated exiled opponents. Just as Libya's domestic policies had resulted in a situation contrary to what Qadhafi claimed he desired, so too had its foreign policy. Qadhafi's maverick foreign policy not only angered Western countries, but it also alienated many of Libya's erstwhile or potential allies in the Third World that were the intended audience of the Third Universal Theory.

Because of the precipitous decline of the oil revenues that had funded Qadhafi's foreign and domestic policies, the dizzying pace of internal change, and the country's image as an international pariah, the regime's viability and durability were questioned. Nevertheless, in late 1987, most foreign observers doubted that a coup d'état was imminent.

INTERNAL POLITICS
LAW AND THE JUDICIARY
OPPOSITION TO QADHAFI
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY
FOREIGN RELATIONS

Until 1951 Libya was under foreign domination. In November 1949 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a sovereign Libyan state comprising three historically diverse regions: Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. The UN commissioner for Libya, Adrian Pelt, suggested the formation of a preparatory committee of twenty-one Libyans (seven from each region) to initiate the framing of a constitution. The committee created the National Constituent Assembly, which first met in November 1950 and subsequently formed committees to draft a constitution. On October 7, 1951, the new constitution was promulgated, and on December 24, King Idris proclaimed Libya's sovereignty and independence.

The constitution established Libya as a monarchy; succession was to pass to Idris's designated heirs. Because of its historically distinct regions, the new country was organized as a federation, each region becoming a province and maintaining its own autonomous administration and legislature. Benghazi and Tripoli alternated as the federation's capital. As do many European parliamentary systems, the constitution provided for an executive branch—the Council of Ministers (or cabinet)—headed by a minister and responsible to the lower house, or Chamber of Deputies, of the bicameral legislature. The number of deputies was 55, later increased to 103. The upper house, or Senate, comprised twenty-four members, eight from each province. The king held considerable executive authority; he formally appointed the Council of Ministers and half of the senators and had the right to veto legislation and dissolve the lower house.

The king endorsed legislation, passed in April 1963, that produced a major constitutional revision; the federal form was replaced by a unitary structure that emphasized centralized national authority. Provincial boundaries were erased, and ten smaller governorates (muhafazat; sing., muhafazah) were created, each headed by a governor appointed by the central government. The constitution was also modified to provide for the extension of suffrage to women and for the royal appointment of all senators. Also, whereas the 1951 constitution had vested sovereignty in the nation and declared the nation to be the source of all power, the 1963 revision proclaimed that sovereignty belonged only to God (Allah) and that it was given as a sacred trust to the state, which was the source of all power.

The 1951 constitution, as amended in 1963, remained in effect until September 1, 1969. At that time a group of military officers and men headed by Captain (later Colonel) Qadhafi overthrew the monarchy and proclaimed a republic instead. The supreme organ of the revolutionary regime, the RCC, replaced the existing constitution with the Constitutional Proclamation of December 11, 1969, which was to be
superseded by a new constitution at some future, unspecified date. Meanwhile, existing laws, decrees, and regulations not in conflict with the December proclamation remained in effect. The proclamation confirmed the RCC as the supreme authority, officially renamed the country the Libyan Arab Republic, and provided for a system of government. It vested sovereignty in the people, made Islam the state religion, and declared Arabic the official language. Education and health care were specified as constitutional rights.

The December 1969 proclamation declared the Libyan people to be part of the Arab nation, dedicated to "the realization of socialism through the application of social justice which forbids any form of exploitation . . . [The state's] aim is to eliminate peacefully the disparities between social class[es]." Furthermore, the 1969 proclamation charged the state with endeavoring "to liberate the national economy from dependence and foreign influence." Public ownership was proclaimed the basis of social development and selfsufficient productivity, but nonexploitative private property would be protected, and inheritance would be governed by the Islamic sharia. Freedom of opinion was guaranteed "within the limits of public interest and the principles of the Revolution."

On the same day that the RCC issued the December 1969 proclamation, it also issued the Decision on the Protection of the Revolution. The decision established the death penalty for anyone attempting to overthrow the revolutionary regime and stipulated imprisonment for "anyone who commits an act of aggression" against the new government. Aggressive acts were defined as propagandizing against the regime, arousing class hatred among the people, spreading false rumors about political and economic conditions in the country, and demonstrating or striking against the government.

On March 2, 1977, in a novel approach to democratic government, Libya adopted a provision known as the Declaration of the Establishment of the People's Authority. The declaration changed the official name of the country to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (sometimes seen as Jamahiriyah). The word jamahiriya is derived from the Arabic word "jamhuriya," meaning "republic." Qadhafi coined the word Jamahiriya; it has no official translation but unofficially has been translated as a "state of the masses," "people's authority," or "people's power." According to Qadhafi, the jamahiriya system was to be "a state run by the people without a government," and it heralded the dawn of a new, more advanced stage in humanity's political evolution, just as the phase of republics represented an advancement over the age of monarques.

**The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC)**
**The General People's Congress**
**Subnational Government and Administration**
**The Arab Socialist Union**
**The Cultural Revolution and People's Committees**
**The Basic People's Congress**
The Revolutionary Committees

The Constitutional Proclamation of December 11, 1969, designated the RCC as the supreme executive and legislative authority in Libya. The RCC itself was a collegial body in which issues and policies were debated until enough consensus developed to establish a unified position. As the RCC's chairman, however, Qadhafi was the dominant figure in the revolutionary government. Although he lacked absolute authority to impose his will on his RCC colleagues, they generally deferred to him as the primary leader and spokesman.

The RCC appointed the members of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers was responsible collectively to the RCC, which could dismiss the prime minister individually or accept the resignation of other ministers. The prime minister's resignation automatically caused the resignation of the entire Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers also was charged with executing general policy in accordance with RCC decisions. When these decisions required new laws, the Council of Ministers drafted legislation for the RCC's consideration. Promulgation was by RCC decree.

After 1969 numerous cabinet shuffles occurred, sometimes in reaction to dissension within the Council of Ministers and threats against the RCC and at other times in attempts to balance or modify the mix of civilian and military members of the cabinet. Qadhafi became prime minister in January 1970, but by 1972 he increasingly left routine administrative tasks to another RCC member, Major Abdel Salam Jallud (also seen as Jalloud), in order to devote himself to revolutionary theory. In July 1972, Jallud assumed the position of prime minister. At the time there was speculation in the foreign press that the new Council of Ministers' composition indicated dissension within the RCC and the diminishing of Qadhafi's authority; these notions proved erroneous, however, at least regarding the latter point. Qadhafi retained the positions of chairman of the RCC, commander in chief of the armed forces, and president of the mass political organization, the ASU, and he personally administered the oath of office to Jallud.

Qadhafi's continuing dedication to revolutionary theorizing led to an April 1974 decree relieving him of his other political, administrative, and protocol duties so that he might devote all of his time to his primary interest. Jallud assumed the functions Qadhafi relinquished; he had already been performing many of them unofficially. Despite the fact that Qadhafi retained the position of commander in chief of the armed forces, speculation again arose that his power and authority were waning. Instead, the RCC decree appeared only to have formalized a division of labor between Qadhafi's theoretical interests and Jallud's practical political and administrative interests—a division that had existed
informally for some time.

The executive system comprising the RCC and the Council of Ministers continued to operate into 1977, with occasional cabinet shuffles. In late 1976, Qadhafi emerged from relative isolation to resume leadership of the RCC. On the seventh anniversary of the Revolution, September 1, 1976, Qadhafi introduced a plan to reorganize the Libyan state. The plan's primary feature was a proposal that a new representative body (the GPC) replace the RCC as the supreme instrument of government. A five-member General Secretariat was created to stand at the apex of the GPC.

The details of the plan were included in the draft Declaration of the Establishment of the People's Authority, adopted by the GPC in extraordinary session on March 2, 1977. The declaration included several basic points: the change in the country's name to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the establishment of popular direct authority through a system culminating in the GPC, and the assignment of responsibility for defending the homeland to every man and woman through general military training.

The GPC also adopted resolutions that designated Qadhafi as its secretary general; created the General Secretariat of the GPC, which comprised the remaining members of the defunct RCC; and appointed the General People's Committee, which replaced the Council of Ministers, its members now called secretaries rather than ministers. For symbolic reasons, initially no secretary of defense was appointed within the General People's Committee, defense having become the responsibility of all citizens.

Since its formation the GPC has met in ordinary session annually, usually for about two weeks in November or December. Delegates numbered over 1,000, somewhat more than 60 percent of whom were leaders of the ASU basic and municipal popular congresses. Other delegates included the members of the General Secretariat of the GPC and the General People's Committee, leaders of the geographically based zone and municipal people's committees, and representatives from functionally based organizations.

With the RCC and the Council of Ministers abolished, all executive and legislative authority technically was vested in the GPC. The GPC, however, formally delegated most of its important authority to its general secretary and General Secretariat and to the General People's Committee. In its December 1978 session, the GPC authorized the General People's Committee to appoint ambassadors, and the secretary of foreign affairs was authorized to receive the credentials of foreign diplomats. The General People's Committee, in accordance with conditions established at the GPC's December 1978 session and on recommendation of the Secretariat of Interior, awards and cancels
Libyan citizenship. The GPC retains the power to select the president and judges of the Supreme Court, the governor and deputy governor of the Central Bank of Libya, the attorney general, and other high officials. The suggestions and advice of the GPC General Secretariat and the General People's Committee probably are decisive regarding such appointments, however. The General Secretariat appoints the members of the General People's Committee.

The GPC has the formal power to declare war, ratify treaties with other countries, and consider general policy plans and their implementation. In these and other functions, however, it is again subject to the advice of the General People's Committee and the supervision of the general secretary and General Secretariat, which make the final decisions. Yet it would be inaccurate to dismiss the GPC as a mere rubber stamp. It has functioned as a clearinghouse and sounding board, receiving the views of the masses (through lower level representative congresses, committees, and functional organizations) and transmitting them to the General Secretariat and General People's Committee. Conversely, it transmits the decisions of the national leadership to the masses, encouraging mass participation in the political system and lending legitimacy to General Secretariat decisions and policies through advice and formal approval. Qadhafi served as secretary general of the GPC until March 1979, at which time he once again formally resigned from all his positions to devote himself to revolutionary action and, in his words, to ensure the "separation of the state from the Revolution."

Because of continuing historical and tribal divisiveness, the federation was replaced with a unitary system in 1963, and the three subnational provinces were replaced by ten governorates. The governorates were subdivided into districts (mutasarrifyat; sing., mutasarrifyah), each of which was further subdivided into subdistricts (mudiriyat; sing., mudiriyah). Executive heads of these geographical units included the governor (muhaafiz), district chief (mutasarrij), and subdistrict chief (mudir), respectively. Large cities, such as Tripoli and Benghazi, were organized as municipalities, headed by mayors, and subdivided into wards.

All subnational executive administrators were appointed by royal authority on recommendation of the minister of interior and approved by the Council of Ministers. Their appointment frequently was based on tribal and subtribal considerations as well as family prestige derived from the family's historical importance, religious standing and leadership, and wealth. Thus, much of the historical divisiveness that the switch from a federal to a unitary system was designed to overcome was perpetuated in the frequent appointment of members of regional and local elite families as subnational administrators.

Interested in minimizing tribal and regional differences and in
encouraging mass participation in the political system, the RCC began modifying the subnational government structure soon after the 1969 revolution. Laws implemented in 1970 and 1971 established the Ministry of Local Government (which assumed some of the duties formerly exercised by the Ministry of Interior), gave local authorities more power to implement policies of the central (national) government, and redesignated some of the names and boundaries of the ten governorates. Selection of chief executives in the governorates, districts, subdistricts, and municipalities remained within the purview of the central government, appointments being made by the RCC on the recommendation of the minister of interior. Lower level administrators were required to meet standardized civil service qualifications.

For the most part, subnational government continued to function as a hierarchical system of administrative links with the central government rather than as a vehicle for popular representation or participation. The RCC as a whole and Qadhafi in particular remained highly critical of inefficient bureaucracy, the lack of commitment to the Revolution displayed by many civil servants and other subnational government functionaries, and the reluctance or inability of the population to participate in the political system. Between 1971 and 1987, subnational government and administration were developed in five major stages in order to correct these deficiencies.

The 1971 creation of the ASU, an imitation of the Egyptian counterpart of the same name, marked the first stage in the drive to modify subnational government. The ASU was envisioned as the direct link between the people and the government (and particularly the RCC). Its purpose was to provide the masses with a system that allowed for participation and representation (thus fostering national unity), commitment to the revolution, and loyalty to the RCC but that could be carefully directed by the RCC. Resolutions passed by ASU organs required RCC decrees or orders for implementation, and the RCC could annul any ASU decision at any level and dissolve any ASU organ. As chairman of the RCC, Qadhafi became president of the ASU.

The ASU was organized on three tiers: at the basic (or local) level, the governorate level, and the national level. Membership was based on both geography (or residence) and function (workplaces, universities, and government bureaucracies). ASU units at both the basic and governorate level were composed of two elements, the conference and the committee. All local and functional ASU members within a basic area constituted the Basic Conference. The Basic Committee, which functioned as the conference's executive, comprised ten members elected by and from the conference. The committee in turn elected its own secretariat and appointed special subcommittees to investigate matters and suggest policies of local interest. The Governorate Conference consisted of two or more representatives elected from each basic unit,
the number of representatives depending on the size of the basic unit's membership. The Governorate Committee consisted of twenty members elected by and from conference members. The committee also elected its secretariat and appointed research subcommittees. ASU university units were equivalent to, and organized in the same manner as, ASU governorate units.

The ASU unit at the national level was the National Congress (sometimes seen as National Conference), an early version of the GPC. It comprised ten, fourteen, or twenty representatives from each ASU governorate unit (depending on the size of the membership of that unit). The National Congress also included members of the RCC and Council of Ministers and delegates from functional organizations.

From its inception, Libyan officials stressed that the ASU was not a political party; rather, it was a mass organization that formed an activist alliance comprising members of various social forces within the population (laborers, farmers, soldiers, women, and so forth) that were committed to the principles of the revolution. Emphasis was placed on "toilers," or workers--initially farmers and laborers--who were to constitute at least half of the membership of all ASU units at all levels. The worker category was later expanded to include--along with farmers and laborers--professionals, artisans, employees, traders, and students. Intellectuals and nonexploitive capitalists were considered workers at one time but were later excluded. Membership in the ASU was open to anyone from the worker categories who was over eighteen years of age, in good legal standing, of sound mental health, and not a member of the former royal family or associated with the defunct monarchical government. Exceptions in these cases could be granted by the RCC. By the time of the first ASU National Congress in 1972, membership was reported to include over 300,000 of some 1 million eligible persons.

A second stage in subnational government revision occurred with the passage of several laws in 1972. Through these laws the districts and subdistricts were abolished, reducing administrative subdivisions to the governorate and the municipality. (Municipalities could be subdivided into branches and other units, but these were secondary, created only when needed on a municipal council's recommendation to the prime minister.) Certain ministerial prerogatives in administration, finance, and local civil service matters were transferred to the governors and mayors. The functions of the Ministry of Municipalities were reabsorbed by the Ministry of Interior, and the prime minister supervised a system of representative's councils at the governorate and municipal levels, councils that were influenced significantly by the ASU.

Governorate and municipal councils were concerned primarily with implementing national policies and drafting plans and regulations pertaining to the provision of regular and emergency health, education, social welfare, and transportation services, as well as with undertaking development and agricultural improvement projects. A governorate had primary authority over these functions when they crossed municipal
Governorate councils comprised both appointed and elected seats. The prime minister appointed ASU members, upon the governor's advice and the ASU's recommendation, to fill ten seats. The popular elections to fill the other seats were supervised by the ASU. The councils also included the area directors of health, education, and other services. Municipal councils were composed of six appointed ASU members, other members of the ASU who were elected through ASU-supervised popular elections, and municipal service administrators. All council decisions were sent to the prime minister, who could reject them. If the council persisted, the matter would be sent to the Council of Ministers for final review. The prime minister also was empowered to dissolve councils.

Bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of public participation continued to plague the subnational governmental system. Not only did the ASU organization appear too complex to foster public involvement by the politically unsophisticated masses, but there was the additional problem of poor coordination between the ASU and subnational administrators. In large part to correct these problems, Qadhafi proclaimed the Cultural Revolution on April 15, 1973. The institutional linchpin of the Cultural Revolution was the people's committee, which also was the primary component of the third stage in the development of subnational administration.

Similar in structure to the ASU, people's committees were both functionally and geographically based. Functionally based people's committees were established in universities, schools, private business firms (including foreign-owned oil companies), farms, public utilities, banks, government organs, the broadcast media, and at harbor and airport facilities. Geographically based people's committees were formed at the governorate, municipal, and zone levels (municipalities being composed of several zones). Direct popular elections filled the seats on the people's committees at the zone level. The zone-level committees selected representatives who collectively formed the Municipal People's Committee; municipal people's committees in turn selected representatives to form the governorate people's committees. Any citizen of at least nineteen years of age was permitted to vote and to run for committee membership, but there were no standardized rules governing the formation of the people's committees, at least at the beginning. This resulted in considerable confusion, particularly when multiple people's committees formed in the same place began denouncing each other. In such instances, new RCC-sanctioned elections had to be called. The deadline for the formation of people's committees was August 1973. Estimates of the number of committees in existence by that time vary from approximately 1,000 to more than 2,000.

According to Qadhafi, people's committees were to be the primary
instrument of the revolution. They were to decide what and who conformed to the principles of the revolution, a task that included the purging of government officials (up to the rank of undersecretary) and private executives and managers. Thousands of functionaries were dismissed, demoted, or transferred. In rare cases, executives and other functionaries were promoted. Such actions severely disrupted the orderly operation of countless government offices and private enterprises, so much so that by the fall of 1973 the press and the RCC were publicly criticizing the zeal with which committees substituted unqualified replacements for experienced persons. At no time did the RCC lose control of the situation, however; on occasion it reversed people's committee actions, dismissed individual committee members, and even dissolved whole committees, sanctioning new elections in the process. In a positive sense, the people's committees provided the masses with still more opportunities to participate in the governmental system, and the purges resulted in the replacement of critics (both real and imagined) of the Qadhafi regime by militants who felt more closely linked to the RCC and the revolution.

The people's committees originally were seen as an experiment, but by October 1973 a new law had formalized their existence and set their term of membership at three years. More significantly, the law transferred the authority and functions of municipal and governorate councils to the people's committees at the same levels. The chairmen of the governorate people's committees became the governors; the chairmen of the municipal people's committees became mayors.

During 1974 doubts increased regarding the operation of the people's committees. The Libyan press warned of the danger inherent in the creation of a new bureaucratic class. In early September, an RCC spokesman publicly accused the committee system of degenerating into anarchy and rashness and of deviating from the path of true democracy. New elections for all levels of people's committees were held from September 14 to October 3; some of the existing committees were reelected.

At the 1974 National Congress, Qadhafi stated that the complexity of administrative machinery limited mass interest in political participation, and he called for the removal of obstacles between the people and the government. He believed that policy planning should be centralized but that execution should be decentralized. The congress responded by recommending the abolition of governorates. It also stressed the primacy of the people's committees in administrative affairs and the ASU's supervisory authority over the committees.

In February 1975, the RCC issued a law that abolished the governorates and their service directorates; twelve years later, however many sources continued to refer to the governorates as though they still existed. A separate Ministry of Municipalities reemerged from the Ministry of Interior. Direction of the services previously administered by the governorate directorates--education, health, housing, social services, labor, agricultural services, communications, financial services, and
economy--was transferred to nine newly created control bureaus. Each control bureau was located in the appropriate ministry, and the ministry became responsible for delivery of the service to the country as a whole. Another RCC law, issued on April 7, formally established the municipality as the sole administrative and geographical subdivision within Libya. It further stipulated that each municipality would be subdivided into quarters, each quarter to have its own people's committee. The municipal people's committee would comprise representatives from the quarters' committees.

The blurred lines of responsibility dividing the ASU (as the organization charged with mobilizing the masses) and the people's committees (charged with being the primary administrative instrument of the revolution) led to minimal cooperation and even conflict between the two systems. Political participation by the population as a whole was lacking, and administration was inefficient. Qadhafi decided that if coordination and cooperation between the ASU and the people's committees were to be increased, and if organized functional groups (especially labor) were to be brought further into an integrated participatory system, still another innovation was required. The fourth stage in modifying subnational government and administration involved a reorganization of the ASU, announced by Qadhafi on April 28, 1975.

Membership in the reorganized ASU was open to all Libyans (except convicted criminals and the mentally ill) as well as to all Arabs living outside Libya. At the lowest geographic level, the submunicipal zone, the population formed the BPC, all citizens within the jurisdiction of a given BPC automatically becoming members of it. By 1987 over 2,000 BPCs had been created. The BPC was headed by an executive or leadership committee of ten members, directed by a secretary (sometimes referred to as a chairman). The leadership committee's function was strictly administrative--announcing congress meetings, preparing minutes, and setting the agenda. Qadhafi noted that the leadership committees would be selected rather than elected, the results of elections not having been entirely satisfactory in the past. Press reports later announced, however, that ASU elections at all levels were held between November 9 and December 3, 1975 (the term "election" possibly having been used in the broadest sense to include some less direct selection process). Each municipal district was composed of several BPCs. The Tripoli ASU municipal district, for example, comprised forty-four BPCs in 1975. Members of the leadership committees of all BPCs within a given municipal district formed the Municipal Popular Congress. A leadership committee of twenty members was selected by that congress.

Leadership committee chairmen from the BPCs and the Municipal Popular Congress were delegates to the highest ASU organ, the National Congress, which met in 1972 and 1974. Also represented at the
municipal congresses and the National Congress were delegates from professional groups and organized labor, a modification in the old form of ASU functional representation based on workplaces. The April 1975 ASU reorganization announcement stipulated that the national representative organ was to be called the National General Congress. A November 13 decree included formal provisions for the new congress, the first session of which was held in January 1976. By the time of its September 1976 session, the national representative body had become the GPC, which had transcended the old ASU National Congress in formal power and purpose.

With the 1975 reorganization of the ASU, the roles of the people's committees and the ASU's BPCs were demarcated, at least theoretically. People's committees were responsible for political matters, and they debated both domestic and foreign policies as presented by the national leadership in the form of a standard agenda. In terms of authority, the political organ was superior to the administrative, the ASU having been assigned supervisory and guidance functions over the people's committees. The GPC, embodying the will of the lower municipal and basic popular congresses, was the highest legislative and executive authority in the country.

Appearance of revolutionary committees in late 1977 marked a further evolution of the political system. In response to Qadhafi's promptings, revolutionary committees sprang up in offices, schools, businesses, and in the armed forces. Carefully selected, they were estimated at 3,000 to 4,000 members in 1985. These supposedly spontaneous groups, made up of zealous, mostly youthful individuals with modest education, functioned as the watchdogs of the regime and guides for the people's committees and popular congresses. As such, their role was to raise popular awareness, to prevent deviation from officially sanctioned ideology, and to combat tribalism, regionalism, self-doubt, apathy, reactionaries, foreign ideologies, and counterrevolutionaries. The formation of the revolutionary committees was a consequence of Qadhafi's impatience with the progress of the revolution, his obsession with achieving direct popular democracy, and his antipathy toward bureaucracy.

The introduction of the revolutionary committees added still another layer to the political system, thus increasing its complexity. The revolutionary committees sent delegates to the GPC. Under Qadhafi's direct command and with his backing, they became so powerful that they frequently intimidated other GPC delegates. Reports of their heavy-handedness and extremism abound. In the 1980s, the "corruption trials" in revolutionary courts in which a defendant had no legal counsel and no right of appeal were widely criticized both at home and abroad. The infamous "hit squads," composed of elements of the revolutionary committees, pursued Qadhafi's opponents overseas, assassinating a
number of them. Violent clashes occurred between revolutionary committees and the officially recognized or legitimate people's groups and the armed forces. It became clear by the mid-1980s that the revolutionary committees had frequently stifled freedom of expression. Regardless of Qadhafi's intentions, they had clearly "undermined any meaningful popular participation in the political process," as Lillian Craig Harris, an authority on Libya, observed.

During the period of the Ottoman Empire, a dual judicial system that distinguished between religious and secular matters developed in Libya and other subject countries. For Muslims, the majority of cases--those involving personal status, such as marriage and inheritance--fell within the jurisdiction of religious courts, which applied the Maliki interpretation of Islamic law--the sharia. The courts were organized into both original jurisdiction and appellate levels and each was directed by a qadi, an Islamic religious judge. Secular matters--those involving civil, criminal, and commercial law--were tried in a separate court system. Laws covering secular matters reflected Western influence in general and the Napoleonic Code in particular. Non-Muslims were not under sharia. For example, the Jewish minority was subject to its own religious courts. Europeans were subject to their national laws through consular courts, the European nations having secured capitulary rights from the Turks.

The colonial powers that ruled Libya after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire maintained the dual judicial structure. After Libya achieved independence, however, an attempt was made to merge the religious and secular legal systems. The merger, in 1954, involved the subordination of Islamic law to secular law. Popular opposition, however, caused the reestablishment of the separate religious and secular jurisdictions in 1958.

The 1969 constitutional proclamation provided little guidance for the postrevolutionary judiciary. Equality before the law and presumption of innocence were stipulated, and inheritance was made subject to sharia. The RCC was given the power to annul or reduce legal sentences by decree and to declare general amnesties. Also stipulated was the independence of judges in the exercise of their duties, subject to law and conscience. It was the RCC, however, that promulgated laws.

Judicial independence and the due process of law were respected during the first decade of the postrevolutionary regime, except when political crimes were involved. After 1979, however, the situation deteriorated in direct proportion to the growth of the revolutionary committees.

Qadhafi and other RCC members believed that the separation of state and religion, and thus of secular and religious law, was artificial--that it violated the Quran and relegated sharia to a secondary status. Two
postrevolutionary bodies dealt with this situation. The Legislative Review and Amendment Committee, composed of Libyan legal experts, was created in October 1971 to make existing laws conform to sharia. The ultimate aim was for Islam to permeate the entire legal system, not only in personal matters, but also in civil, criminal, and commercial law. The Higher Council for National Guidance was created the next year. Among its philosophical and educational duties was the presentation of Islamic moral and spiritual values in such a way that they would be viable in contemporary Libyan society.

Application of Islamic legal tenents to contemporary law and society presented certain difficulties. There was, for example, the question of the proper contemporary meaning of traditional Islamic physical punishments, such as the severance of a hand for the crime of theft. Debates arose over whether severance should mean actual amputation or merely impeding the hand from future crime by removing need and temptation. The most literal interpretations were adopted, but their actual imposition as legal punishment was very much restricted by exemptions and qualifications, also based on Islamic tenets. A thief’s hand would not be amputated, for example, if he truly repented of his crime or if he had committed the theft to feed a starving family. Indeed, numerous observers have reported that the more extreme physical punishments are rarely, if ever, performed.

With the acceptance of the primacy of Islamic law, the dual religious-secular court structure was no longer necessary. In November 1973, the religious judicial system of qadi courts was abolished. The secular court system was retained to administer justice, but its jurisdiction now included religious matters. Secular jurisprudence had to conform to sharia, which remained the basis for religious jurisprudence. In 1987 the court system had four levels: summary courts (sometimes referred to as partial courts), courts of first instance, appeals courts, and the Supreme Court.

Summary courts were located in most small towns. Each consisted of a single judge who heard cases involving misdemeanors. Misdemeanors were disputes involving amounts up to Libyan dinar (LD) 100. Most decisions were final, but in cases where the dispute involved more than LD20 the decision could be appealed.

The primary court was the court of first instance. One court of first instance was located in each area that formerly had constituted a governorate before the governorates as such were abolished in 1975. Courts of first instance heard appeals from summary courts and had original jurisdiction over all matters in which amounts of more than LD100 were involved. A panel of three judges, ruling by majority decision, heard civil, criminal, and commercial cases and applied sharia to personal or religious matters that were formerly handled by the qadi courts.

The three courts of appeals sat at Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sabha. A three-judge panel, again ruling by majority decision, served in each court and
heard appeals from the courts of first instance. Original jurisdiction applied to cases involving felonies and high crimes. Sharia judges who formerly sat in the Sharia Court of Appeals were assigned to the regular courts of appeals and continue to specialize in sharia appellate cases.

The Supreme Court was located in Tripoli and comprised five chambers: civil and commercial, criminal, administrative, constitutional, and sharia. A five-judge panel sat in each chamber, the majority establishing the decision. The court was the final appellate body for cases emanating from lower courts. It could also interpret constitutional matters. However, it no longer had cassation or annulment power over the decisions of the lower courts, as it did before the 1969 revolution. Because there was a large pool of Supreme Court justices from which the panel was drawn at a given time, the total number of justices was unfixed. All justices and the president (also seen as chairman) of the court were appointed by the GPC; most likely the General Secretariat made the actual selections. Before its abolition, the RCC made Supreme Court appointments.

Some bodies involved in the administration or the enforcement of justice were situated outside the regular court system. For example, the Supreme Council of Judicial Authorities was an administrative body that coordinated and supervised the various courts. It also established the salaries and seniority rules for judges, whom it could transfer or retire. The Council of State, much like the French Conseil d'Etat, delivered advisory legal opinions for government bodies regarding draft legislation and other actions or regulations it was contemplating, as well as contract negotiations in which it might be involved. It also included an administrative court to provide relief in civil cases involving arbitrary or otherwise unfair administrative decisions.

In 1971 a people's court was established to try members of the former royal family, the prime ministers and other officials of the monarchical regime, people accused of rigging elections in behalf of that regime, and journalists and editors accused of corrupting public opinion before the revolution. A member of the RCC presided over the court, which also included one representative each from the armed forces, the Islamic University, the Supreme Court, and the police. Trials and retrials continued at least as late as 1975, when former King Idris was sentenced to death in absentia. An amnesty for some of those sentenced in 1971 was granted by the RCC in 1976.

With matters pertaining to the former monarchical regime having been resolved, it appeared that several people's courts were being used in the late 1970s to try crimes against the postrevolutionary state. In January 1977, a new people's court was formed to try political detainees. The Decision on the Protection of the Revolution, issued December 11, 1969, generally defined crimes against the state as those involving attempted forcible overthrow of the ruling regime or otherwise rallying opposition to it. Such crimes may be referred to a people's court, but plots and conspiracies against the state are usually referred to special military courts created on an ad hoc basis for that purpose. The military courts
and the people's courts have been criticized for violating the legal rights of defendants in political cases.

In the early 1980s, a separate and parallel judicial system emerged that abrogated many procedures and rights ensured by the traditional court system. With the regime's blessing and encouragement, revolutionary committee members established revolutionary courts that held public, often televised, trials of those charged with crimes against the revolution. A law promulgated in 1981 prohibited private legal practice and made all lawyers employees of the Secretariat of Justice. In these courts, the accepted norms--such as due process, the right to legal representation, and right of appeal--were frequently violated. According to Amnesty International, Libya held seventy-seven political prisoners in 1985, of whom about eighteen were held without trial or remained in detention after having been acquitted. Others allegedly died under torture while in the custody of members of the revolutionary committees. Libya also sanctioned murder of political opponents abroad, a policy reaffirmed on March 2, 1985, by the GPC.

Immediately after the revolution, the role that labor unions, professional syndicates, and other organized interest groups would play in the new society was in doubt. Regarding labor unions, for example, Qadhafi stated in a November 4, 1969, speech in Tripoli: "There will be no labor unions . . . . Laborers and the revolution are an indivisible entity. There may be certain labor organizations, but only for ordinary administrative duties." On November 30, however, Qadhafi stated in an interview that there was no thought of abolishing labor unions and student organizations, but they must "truly represent their groups with a revolutionary spirit. We do not accept intermediaries between the revolution and its working forces."

After the revolution, most prerevolutionary interest groups were abolished and new ones created. Functioning within the framework of the ASU at first, and the GPC after 1976, the new interest groups lacked autonomy and played an insignificant political role. In January 1976, the ASU National Congress emphasized that political activity was to be solely within the purview of popular congresses. After 1976 labor unions and other associations performed only administrative duties pertaining to the occupations or nonpolitical activities of their members. Strikes have been prohibited since 1972. In Qadhafi's ideology, workers should be transformed into partners; to work for wages is a form of slavery. Therefore, he urged workers to take over companies, factories, and schools and to set up people's committees to manage production and decide priorities. In theory, this system would make labor unions unnecessary.

In fact, however, unions continued to exist. In the mid-1980s, there were some 275,000 members belonging to 18 trade unions, which together formed the Tripoli-based National Trade Union Federation. In addition, separate syndicates existed for teachers, engineers, physicians, lawyers, and other professionals. Other groups represented women and students. The GPC included components of all these units. Although Libyan
interest groups did not have a real political role similar to that such
groups play in the Western tradition, their responsibilities included
contributing to the cultural revolution, raising the revolutionary
consciousness of their members, and mobilizing support for national
leaders and their policies.

Before the Revolution of 1969, organized labor played a significant role
in opposing the monarchy. Yet the union movement was too young to be
established firmly, and it had no connection with the military group that
overthrew the king. Consequently, unions and most other interest groups
have not resisted the limitations imposed within the postrevolutionary
framework and the concomitant lack of a real political role. Students
have proved an exception, however. Early postrevolutionary enthusiasm
for the RCC quickly changed to opposition as a significant number of
students reacted against restrictions on the autonomy of student leaders.

It was not surprising that opposition arose to the rapid radical changes
ushered in by the Qadhafi regime. The wealthy, the privileged, and the
traditional tribal and religious elites resented their postrevolutionary loss
of power. The ranks of the opposition also grew to include sections of
the armed forces, university students, intellectuals and technocrats, and
even some of the new political and tribal leaders who clashed with the
core elite for one reason or another.

For its part, the revolutionary regime made it clear from the outset that it
would brook no opposition. Opposition from political parties or other
interest groups was viewed as harmful to national unity. Speaking in
October 1969, Qadhafi stated that Libya needed "national unity free of
party activities and division" and that "he who engages in party activities
commits treason." The December 1969 Decision on the Protection of the
Revolution, the Penal Code, and Law No. 71 of 1972 rendered political
party activities a crime and formed a strict legal injunction against
unauthorized political activity, particularly if such activity should
physically threaten the state. Insulting the Constitution or popular
authorities and joining a nonpolitical international society without
permission were both punishable by imprisonment. Attempting to
change the government or the Constitution through force,
propagandizing theories or principles aimed at such action, and forming
an illegal group were crimes punishable by death. One of the basic
points of the cultural revolution, declared in April 1973, called for the
repression of communism and conservatism. Also to be repressed were
capitalism, atheism, and the secretive Muslim Brotherhood (see
Glossary).

Despite legal strictures and physical attempts to nullify opposition, there
has been resistance to the revolutionary regime. The discovery of a plot
involving two cabinet ministers (lieutenant colonels who were not RCC
members) was announced in December 1969. A second plot, allegedly
based in Fezzan and involving a distant cousin of former King Idris, was discovered in July 1970. Participation of foreign mercenaries was alleged in both cases. Other resistance has been encountered from traditional tribal leaders who have not welcomed their own displacement by modernizing technocrats, government administrators, people's committees, and popular congresses. Numerous technocrats and other elements of the urban population opposed Qadhafi's emphasis on religion. Traditional Islamic religious leaders also opposed Qadhafi's approach to Islam because its uniquely personal and fundamentalist nature superseded their intermediary position and interpretive function.

As in many other developing countries, aspects of the modernization process—such as education and mass communications—also result in impatience and dissatisfaction with the ruling regime. Increased education and exposure to the mass media were intended to inculcate Libyan citizens with patriotism and loyalty to the regime; however, through education and the media, Libyans also were informed of standards of living and political freedoms enjoyed elsewhere in the world. Exposure to the media created rising expectations that probably increased demands on the government rather than increasing support for it through propaganda.

As previously noted, students have been the source of the most visible opposition to the Qadhafi regime. They initially appeared to support the revolution. Friction soon developed, however, when it became clear that student organizations would lose their autonomy within the ASU or GPC framework. The revolution nonetheless continued to have student supporters, and many of the first people's committees formed in the wake of the 1973 cultural revolution were established at universities. Those committees radically altered curricula, dismissed professors and deans, and terminated the school term early so that students could join volunteer projects and receive military training. Seventeen years after the Qadhafi-led coup, students as a whole remained divided between supporters and critics of the revolutionary regime.

A particularly serious incident occurred in January 1976 when students at the University of Benghazi protested government interference in student union elections. Elected students who were not ASU members were considered officially unacceptable by the authorities. Security forces moved onto the campus, and violence resulted. Reports that several students were shot and killed in the incident were adamantly denied by the government. Nonetheless, sympathizers organized more protests. Qadhafi and Jallud, speaking on April 6 at Tripoli University, called on revolutionaries there to drive out the opposition. Some clashes occurred as the newly formed people's committee undertook the purging of nonrevolutionaries. The school was finally closed temporarily and then renamed Al Fatah University. Since that time, there have been intermittent reports of student rebelliousness. In April 1984, for instance, two students at Al Fatah University were publicly hanged. Apparently in revenge, two revolutionary committee members were found murdered on campus. According to Amnesty International, two more students died in 1985, allegedly under torture while in the custody of the revolutionary
committees.

The military remained the most serious threat to the Qadhafi regime. By March 1987, there were signs of disaffection among the officers. In part, this was the result of mounting casualties and setbacks in the Chad war. Such discontent was illustrated by the defection to Egypt in early March of six air force personnel, including a lieutenant colonel. Upon landing at Abu Simbel airfield in Upper Egypt, the airmen denounced Qadhafi's rule and requested asylum.

Qadhafi's calls for a people's army that would eventually replace the professional military evidently disturbed the armed forces. Furthermore, the revolutionary committees often increased their power at the military's expense. In addition, the military resented the revolutionary committees' interference in national security affairs. It was reported, for example, that brief armed clashes between the two groups took place when certain missile positions were unable to respond to the United States air attacks in April 1986 because revolutionary committee members who were supposed to man them could not be found.

That Qadhafi had entrusted the revolutionary committees with the vital mission of manning air defense positions underscored the extent to which he has deployed them to counterbalance the power of the armed forces. It indicated that Qadhafi had learned one vital lesson from the often-turbulent Middle East politics, namely that the military has masterminded most coups d'etat. In measure to forestall possible coup attempts, military commanders were frequently rotated or forced into early retirement. In 1984, for example, about seventy senior officers were obliged to retire. Despite such precautions, the military had managed to stage most of the attempts against Qadhafi since 1976. Most experts believed that the military was the group most likely to topple Qadhafi.

In April 1973, Qadhafi launched the five-point Cultural Revolution. Among the points was the replacement of existing laws by sharia. In a speech on April 28, he asked University of Benghazi law students to help revise the legal codes and repeatedly emphasized the principle of the primacy of Islamic law over other jurisprudence. The traditional religious establishment gave initial support to Qadhafi's restoration of Islamic jurisprudence, but it soon started to oppose his actions, accusing him of pretensions.

First, Qadhafi challenged the traditional role of the ulama (Islamic jurists or scholars) as expert interpreters of the Quran. Because the Quran is written in Arabic, argued Qadhafi, anyone who knows Arabic can understand it. As did Martin Luther's Protestantism, Qadhafi's interpretation of Islam recognizes no need for intermediaries between God and humans.

Furthermore, Qadhafi in effect arrogated a new role to himself- that of a mujtahid, a Muslim jurist who renders decisions based on the opinions of one of the four legal schools of Islam. In this case, Qadhafi sought to
reinterpret the Quran in light of modern conditions and current needs. His insistence on the necessity to sweep aside virtually the entire body of Islamic commentary and learning, including the hadith (the Prophet Muhammad's sayings and precedents based on his behavior), and to limit the legitimate sources of legislation to the Quran alone has caused misgivings throughout the Islamic world.

Moreover, Qadhafi's interpretation of Islam was considered radical. He considered the Quran to be the only source of sharia and community. As did other Muslim reformers, Qadhafi saw deviation from "true" Islamic teachings as the cause of the weakness of Islamic lands, including Libya. Like them, he also called for a return to the source, the Quran. But unlike most other reformers, Qadhafi excluded the hadith and the sunna (the lifestyle and deeds of the Prophet) as reliable sources of legislation. By questioning the authenticity of the hadith, Qadhafi has in effect dismissed the entire edifice of traditional *fikh* (Islamic jurisprudence). As one scholar, Ann Elizabeth Mayer, put it, "discrediting the hadith entails rejection of by far the greater part of Islamic law." In essence, Qadhafi rejected *taqlid* (obedience to received authority, i.e., the revelation of God to the Prophet Muhammad) in favor of *ijtihad* (the right to interpretation).

In 1977 Qadhafi took yet another unprecedented, no less controversial step, altering the Muslim calendar. Instead of starting from the date of the Prophet's migration to Medina, the year began with the date of the Prophet's death. Shocked by Qadhafi's radical reinterpretation of Islam, the ulama accused him of heresy. Characteristically, however, the Libyan leader was undaunted.

The confrontation with the ulama began in the mid-1970s, when they criticized some aspects of Qadhafi's increasingly idiosyncratic and radical ideology. In 1977, for example, the grand mufti (chief religious judge) of Libya criticized the sequestration of private property, which resulted from the new law prohibiting the ownership of more than one house.

The clergy were upset because, in effect, *The Green Book* was displacing sharia as the blueprint for Libya's political and social development. Furthermore, inasmuch as the Third Universal Theory is purportedly a relevant model for non-Muslim Third World countries, the theory's reliance on Islamic precepts had to be diluted.

Accusing the ulama of siding with the upper classes, in February 1978 Qadhafi warned them against interfering in the regime's socialist policies. A few months later, some mosques were seized and their imams (prayer leaders) replaced by more compliant ones. To undermine further the legitimacy of the religious leaders, Qadhafi blamed the grand mufti for failing to declare a jihad against the Italians during the 1930s. Qadhafi's relentless attacks on the traditional religious establishment succeeded in eroding it hitherto lofty status, thereby removing a powerful center of opposition to regime-sponsored changes.
Apart from conflicts with the traditional religious hierarchy, Qadhafi had a longstanding conflict with the Muslim Brotherhood and other fundamentalist groups, whose membership went into exile or underground during Qadhafi’s tenure. In March 1987, it was reported that nine Muslim dissidents, members of a little-known group called Holy War, were executed for plotting to assassinate Soviet advisers. A revolutionary committee member was assassinated in Benghazi in October 1986 by the hitherto unknown Hizballah (Party of God). As a result, the revolutionary committees began to monitor more closely than before the activities of the mosques, the imams, and the fundamentalists. The country’s forty-eight Islamic institutes reportedly were closed in late 1986, apparently to stem the tide of religious, particularly fundamentalist, opposition.

Over twenty opposition groups exist outside Libya. The most important in 1987 was the Libyan National Salvation Front (LNSF), formed in October 1981, and led by Muhammad Yusuf al Magariaf, formerly Libyan ambassador to India. The LNSF was based in Sudan until the fall of the Numayri regime in 1985, after which its operations were dispersed. The LNSF rejected military and dictatorial rule and called for a democratic regime with constitutional guarantees, free elections, free press, and separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The group published a bimonthly newsletter, *Al Inqadh* (Salvation).

The LNSF claimed responsibility for the daring attack on Qadhafi’s headquarters at Bab al Aziziyyah on May 8, 1984. Although the coup attempt failed and Qadhafi escaped unscathed, dissident groups claimed that some eighty Libyans, Cubans, and East Germans perished. According to various sources, the United States Central Intelligence Agency trained and supported the LNSF before and after the May 8 operation. Domestically, some 2,000 people were arrested and 8 were hanged publicly. The LNSF also organized the April 1984 demonstration in London in which a British policewoman was killed by a Libyan diplomat, leading to the breaking of diplomatic relations between Tripoli and London.

Another opposition group, the Libyan Liberation Organization, based in Cairo, was formed in 1982. In 1987 it was led by Abdul Hamid Bakkush, a prime minister during the Idris monarchy. In mid-November 1984, Libyan officials were greatly embarrassed by their premature claims of responsibility for the assassination of Bakkush. In fact, the entire operation was elaborately stagemanaged by the Egyptian security forces, who produced a very much alive Bakkush on television along with members of the four-man hit squad, which reportedly consisted of two British citizens and two Maltese.

Al Burkan (The Volcano), a highly secretive and violent organization that emerged in 1984, has been responsible for the assassination of many Libyan officials overseas. For instance, it claimed responsibility for the death of the Libyan ambassador in Rome in January 1984, and, a year later, for the assassination of the Libyan Information Bureau chief, also
in Rome. A Libyan businessman with close ties to Qadhafi was shot
dead on June 21, 1984, in Athens during the visit of Abdul Salam
Turayki, Libya's secretary of foreign liaison.

Less well-known opposition groups outside Libya were the Libyan
Constitutional Union, the pro-Iraqi Libyan National Movement, the
Libyan National Democratic Grouping led by Mahmud Sulaymon al
Maghrabi, Libya's first postrevolutionary prime minister, and Al Haq, a
rightist pro-monarchy group.

The opposition groups outside Libya remained disunited and largely
ineffective. Divided ideologically into such groups as Baathists,
socialists, monarchists, liberals, and Islamic fundamentalists, they
agreed only on the necessity of overthrowing the Qadhafi regime. An
initial step toward coordination was taken in January 1987 when eight
opposition groups, including the Libyan National Movement, the Libyan
National Struggle Movement, and the Libyan Liberation Organization,
agreed to form a working group headed by Major Abd al Munim al
Huni, a former RCC member who has been living in Cairo since the
1975 coup attempt that was led by another RCC member, Umar
Muhayshi. Some observers speculated that because Huni appeared to be
acceptable to all opposition groups and in view of his close ties to the
military, he may well be the man most likely to succeed Qadhafi. If the
Iranian experience offered any insights, the hallmark of the post-Qadhafi
era would be a bloody power struggle between erstwhile coalition
groups of diverse ideological beliefs. By early 1987, it was by no means
clear which faction might emerge as the ultimate victor, should Qadhafi
be toppled. It must be kept in mind, however, that the Libyan leader has
outlasted many of his enemies, both foreign and domestic.

To deal with outside opposition, the Libyan regime continued its
controversial policy of physical liquidation of opponents. On March 2,
1985, the GPC reiterated its approval of the policy of "the pursuit and
physical liquidation of the stray dogs." During the 1985 wave of
violence, a number of Libyans living abroad were killed or wounded.
Among the casualties were former ambassador Ezzedin Ghadamsi,
seriously wounded in Vienna on February 28; businessman Ahmad
Barrani, killed in Cyprus on April 2; another businessman, Yusuf Agila,
wounded in Athens on October 6; and Gibril Denali, a thirty-year-old
student living in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) as a
political refugee, assassinated in Bonn on April 6. The liquidation policy
continued into 1987 when Muhammad Salim Fuhaymah, an executive
committee member of the Libyan National Organization, was
assassinated in Athens on January 7.

The physical liquidation policy has drawn universal condemnation.
However, the impact of the policy, should not be exaggerated. During
1984, there were 4 assassinations of Libyans abroad and between 20 and
120 executions internally. Scholar Lillian Craig Harris, writing in late
1986, stated that since 1980 twenty anti-Qadhafi Libyans had been
assassinated abroad.
In the late 1980s, Qadhafi continued to perceive himself as a revolutionary leader. Qadhafi has always claimed that the September 1969 overthrow of the monarchy was a popular revolution, not merely a military coup d'état. In fact, only a few military officers and enlisted men took part in the September revolution. Qadhafi reconciled the apparent inconsistency by stressing that the military—and more specifically the Free Officers Movement, whose members took part in the coup and subsequently formed the RCC—shared the humble origins of the people and represented their demands. Qadhafi depicted the military as the vanguard elite of the people, a concept adopted from Marxist-Leninist ideology. But although Qadhafi wanted to be recognized as a revolutionary leader and justified military domination of Libya with the concept of the vanguard elite, he excoriated communism as well as capitalism.

The wellsprings of Qadhafi's political thought are the Quran and Nasserism. As an ardent admirer of Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser, Qadhafi has never wavered in the conviction that he is Nasser's legitimate heir. As such, he felt compelled to advance Nasser's struggle for Arab unity and socialism. Qadhafi was influenced by Nasser's theory of the concentric Islamic, Arab, and African circles of influence. And Qadhafi, like Nasser, was also influenced by the ideology of the Syrian Baath Party, which advocated Arab unity and socialism.

Qadhafi expanded Nasser's political thought by emphasizing the Islamic bases of socialism in that the Quran condemns class domination and exploitation. Qadhafi stated that although Islam "cannot be described as socialism in its modern sense, it strives to a certain extent to dissolve the differences among classes." According to Qadhafi, "almsgiving is the nucleus of the socialist spirit in Islam." Socialism in Libya was to mean "social justice." Work, production, and resources were all to be shared fairly, and extreme disparities between rich and poor were to be eliminated. But social hierarchy, as provided for in the Quran, would remain, and class harmony, not class warfare, would be the result. Qadhafi stressed that this socialism, inherent in Islam, was not merely a stage toward communism, as the Marxist theorists would argue.

For Qadhafi as for Nasser, Arab nationalism took primacy over pan-Islamism. Both leaders can be described as secularists, although Qadhafi increasingly emphasized the Islamic roots of his ideology. Yet, his main interest undoubtedly lay in the secular rather than the sacred world. Revolution, the propagation of *The Green Book*, mass mobilization, and liberation remained his obsessions. "I love the people, all the people," he proclaimed in a 1986 interview with a French television newscaster published in *Jeune Afrique*. "I would like the people to vanquish the government, the armies, the police, the parties, and the parliaments," he said in explanation of his notion of direct democracy in which people rule themselves without the mediation of traditional governmental institutions. "I am the prophet of the revolution and not the prophet of
Allah," Qadhafi declared in the same interview, "for what interests me in this century is that *The Green Book* become the bible of the modern world."

The secular basis of Qadhafi’s philosophy was emphasized further by the Libyan adoption of the Baath Party slogan of unity, freedom, and socialism. These ideals were embodied in the first revolutionary pronouncement of September 1, 1969, and reiterated in the Constitutional Proclamation of December 11, 1969. They were afterward refined and modified in response to practical Libyan considerations. The ideal of freedom included the freedom of the nation and its citizens from foreign oppression. Freedom was considered to have been achieved by the revolution and the subsequent negotiations that quickly ended the existence of foreign military bases in Libya. The ideal of freedom also encompassed freedom from want of the basic necessities of life and freedom from poverty, disease, and ignorance. In this regard, the ideal of freedom called for the ideal of socialism.

Libyan socialism has succeeded to the extent that social welfare programs have been subsidized by oil revenues. By all accounts, the Qadhafi regime has succeeded to an impressive degree in fulfilling basic human material needs. Libya has also been relatively successful in achieving economic egalitarianism. To Qadhafi, such equality entails abolishing the conventional employer-employee relationship. Wage labor is regarded as a form of slavery. Similarly, to prevent landlord-tenant relationships, no person may own more than one house. Furthermore, because domestic servants are considered "a type of slave," the residents of a house should perform their own household work. To achieve economic justice, the slogans of "partners, not wage-earners" and "those who produce, consume" have been proclaimed and, to a significant degree, established.

The Libyan revolutionary ideal of unity was Arab unity, the cause for which Qadhafi was the undisputed champion after the death of Nasser. Qadhafi believed that, through unity, Arabs had achieved greatness during the Middle Ages, when Arab accomplishments in the arts and sciences had overshadowed European counterparts. He further believed that foreign oppression and colonial domination ended Arab unity; until it was restored, the Arab world would suffer injustice and humiliation, as it had when Palestine was lost. Qadhafi believed that the ideal of unity should be realized through practical steps, initial combinations of Arab states providing the nucleus for some form of ultimate unity. Toward this end he initiated unity schemes between Libya and several other countries, but, as of 1987, none of the schemes had been successful. At the 1972 National Congress, Qadhafi likened the role of Libya in unifying the Arab nation to that of Prussia in unifying Germany and to that of Piedmont in unifying Italy.

Although most Arab leaders share or sympathize with Qadhafi’s ideology of Arab unity, most consider as naïve his ardent conviction that unity can be accomplished. Despite his transnational orientation, Qadhafi is parochial in his outlook. His beduin background, obviously a
critical factor shaping his personality, inculcated a set of values and modes of behavior often at odds with prevailing international norms. Therefore, he has been awkward at diplomatic give-and-take in comparison to other Arab leaders. For Qadhafi, nomadic life is preferable to urban ways because of its simplicity, pervasive sense of egalitarianism, and puritanism unpolluted by modern, largely alien, cultural influences.

**Third Universal Theory**

**The Cultural Revolution**

**The Green Book**

In the early 1970s, Qadhafi began to synthesize and expand his ideas of Arab unity, independence, economic egalitarianism, and cultural authenticity into the Third Universal Theory. The importance of this new theory to the regime was shown by the creation of the Higher Council for National Guidance on September 10, 1972. The council comprised the RCC chairman; the ASU secretary general; the minister of education; the minister of information and culture; the minister of youth and social affairs; the minister of planning, the University of Libya's president; the administrative chairmen of religious endowments; the Muslim Call Society chairman, and the ASU secretary of thought and culture.

The Higher Council for National Guidance was created to disseminate and implement Qadhafi's Third Universal Theory (also seen as the Third International Theory or simply the Third Theory). The Third Universal Theory was predicated on the belief that the two dominant socio-politico-economic ideologies—capitalism and communism—had been proved invalid. According to the theory, capitalism placed the good of a few individuals ahead of that of the community as a whole; communism so emphasized the community that individual development was stifled. Nations constituting what is commonly referred to as the Third World were caught between proponents of the two ideologies: the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which, according to Qadhafi, were "imperialist states which seek to achieve their ambitions by extending their zones of influence."

Qadhafi proclaimed that the Third Universal Theory, because it was based on the Quran, predated capitalism and communism. Furthermore, it offered an alternative. It rejected the class exploitation of capitalism and the class warfare of communism, finding that, in practice at least, systems based on both ideologies were dominated by a small elite. According to the Third Universal Theory, classes were an artificial colonial import. Far from building a system that rested on some form of class relations, the theory sought to eliminate class differences. It embodied the Islamic principle of consultation (shura), by which community or even national affairs would be conducted through mutual consultation in which the views of all citizens were exchanged. This
The Third Universal Theory was an attempt to establish a philosophical grounding, based on Islam, for positive neutrality on the part of Third World nations. Under the theory, Third World states could coexist with the United States and the Soviet Union, and they could enter into agreements with them for their own purposes. But Third World states in general and Arab states in particular should not fall under the dominance of either of the two ideological, imperialist superpowers. In dividing the world between the two superpowers and their supposed prey, the Third Universal Theory anticipated much of what has come to be called the North-South interpretation of international relations, whereby the world is divided into natural-resource-consuming nations (the industrialized North) and the natural-resource-producing nations (the underdeveloped South). Indeed, Qadhafi has championed this interpretation of international relations. Guided by this viewpoint, Libya has been a strong supporter of national liberation movements against colonial regimes, even though the terrorist tactics used by some groups have tarnished Libya's international reputation and led to economic sanctions and to military attacks in mid-1986.

Central to the Third Universal Theory are the concepts of religion and nationalism as embodied in Islam. Qadhafi believes that religion and nationalism have been the "two paramount drives that moved forward the evolutionary process. They constitute man's history as they have formed nations, peoples, wars." In short, Qadhafi believes that religion determines human actions and interactions.

The atheism of the communists is another reason Qadhafi finds their ideology invalid. According to Qadhafi, communists cannot be trusted because they fear no ultimate judgment and thus may break their word if they consider it beneficial in any particular case. Islam, as the essence of monotheism, is the true religion that encompasses Jews, Christians, and Muslims, all of whom followed God's prophets. The differences among these religions exist not because of the prophets' teachings but because of differences among their followers.

According to Qadhafi, if religion is basic to the individual, nationalism is basic to the society. The Quran refers to tribes and nations that are inherent in the universe. A person belongs to a nationality upon birth. Only later does he or she become a conscious member of a religion. Thus, Qadhafi faults those who deny the validity of nationality. His concept of nationality, therefore, relates to his concept of Arab unity.

In this regard, Qadhafi adheres to the traditional, secularly based view of Arab nationalism propounded by such thinkers as Michel Aflaq, a founder and key political philosopher of the Baath Party, and Nasser. For Qadhafi, nationalism takes precedence over religion. In a wide-ranging speech before the GPC meeting in Sabha on March 2, 1987, Qadhafi denounced Islamic fundamentalism as "nonsense" and stated that "no banner should be hoisted over the Arab homeland except the banner of
Qadhafi was evidently disappointed with the failure of the Libyan populace to embrace and practice the principles of the Third Universal Theory. Characteristically impatient, by 1973 Qadhafi had grown critical of the people's lack of revolutionary commitment. He complained of the general refusal to fill positions in the military or to take jobs in the countryside (for which foreign workers had to be recruited), of students who wished to study only in the United States, and of an increase in the crime rate. Perhaps worst of all to Qadhafi was the apathy and reluctance with which a significant portion of the Libyan people greeted the impending Libyan merger with Egypt scheduled for September of 1973. He contended that such attitudes threatened the revolutionary advances anticipated when the monarchy was overthrown. That action had changed the form of government, but if other fundamental social, economic, and political changes were to be accomplished, the people would have to be rededicated to the Revolution. Thus in an April 15, 1973, speech at Zuwarah, Qadhafi proclaimed the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution comprised five points: the annulment of all existing laws promulgated by the previous monarchical regime and their replacement by laws based on sharia; the repression of communism and conservatism by purging all political deviates--those who opposed or resisted the revolution, such as communists, atheists, members of the Muslim Brotherhood, advocates of capitalism, and agents of Western propaganda; the distribution of arms to the people so that a popular resistance would protect the revolution; administrative reform to end excessive bureaucracy, dereliction of duty, and bribery; and the promotion of Islamic thought by rejecting any ideas that were not in keeping with it, especially ideas imported from other countries and cultures. People's committees were established nationwide to enforce these policies and to control the revolution from below. If the people refused to participate in the popular revolution, Qadhafi threatened to resign, a tactic he had used on several occasions.

In May 1973, Qadhafi discussed the cultural revolution with foreign reporters and tried to stress its dissimilarity from the Chinese Cultural Revolution. According to Qadhafi, the Libyan Cultural Revolution--unlike the Chinese Cultural Revolution--did not introduce something new, but rather marked the return to the Arab and Islamic heritage. It represented a quest for authenticity in that it tried to forge or unearth linkages to the religiocultural foundations of society.

Several experts agree that Libya's Cultural Revolution struck a responsive chord in the Libyan psyche, similar to that struck by the rejection of Westernization in Iran. To a significant extent, Qadhafi's insistence on a foreign policy independent of either superpower, his hostility toward Israel and its supporters, his search for an alternate
model based on indigenous Muslim values, and his criticism of bureaucracy and consumerism were shared by the Libyan people. Qadhafi did not appear odd in the Libyan context, despite his image in the foreign media. Instead, as expert Lisa Anderson stated, he was "an uncanny reflection of the average Libyan."
Qadhafi spelled out his prescriptions for the Libyan Cultural Revolution in his *The Green Book*, which grew eventually to comprise three slim volumes. Many foreign observers who had compared Libya's Cultural Revolution to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, naturally compared *The Green Book* to Mao's *Red Book*. Like Mao's *Red Book*, *The Green Book* has been widely distributed both inside and outside the country. Both are written in a simple, understandable style with many memorable slogans. In size, both are rather modest, but their impact cannot be exaggerated. In a sense, *The Green Book* has vied with the Quran as the basis for Libya's development, much as *The Red Book* attempted to supplant the Confucian system of thought.

**The Green Book, Part I**

In April 1974, Qadhafi relinquished his governmental duties to devote full time to ideological concerns and mass organization. A year later, he announced the reorganization of the ASU to include popular congresses, topped by the GPC. In March 1977, the GPC became, at least formally, the primary instrument of government in Libya. The reorganization of the ASU and the elevation of the GPC were carried out in conjunction with Qadhafi's political theories found in his work, *The Green Book, Part I: The Solution of the Problem of Democracy*.

*The Green Book* begins with the premise that all contemporary political systems are merely the result of the struggle for power between instruments of governing. Those instruments of governing--parliaments, electoral systems, referenda, party government--are all undemocratic, divisive, or both. Parliaments are based on indirect democracy or representation. Representation is based on separate constituencies; deputies represent their constituencies, often against the interests of other constituencies. Thus, the total national interest is never represented, and the problem of indirect (and consequently unrepresentative) democracy is compounded by the problem of divisiveness. Moreover, an electoral system in which the majority vote wins all representation means that as much as 49 percent of the electorate is unrepresented. (A win by a plurality can have the result that an even greater percentage of the electorate is unrepresented; electoral schemes to promote proportional representation increase the overall representative nature of the system, but small minorities are still left unrepresented.) Qadhafi also believes referenda are undemocratic because they force the electorate to answer simply yes or no to complex issues without being able to express fully their will. He says that because parties represent specific interests or classes, multiparty political systems are inherently factionalized. In contrast, a single-party political system has the disadvantage of institutionalizing the dominance of a single interest or class.

Qadhafi believes that political systems have used these kinds of indirect or representative instruments because direct democracy, in which all participate in the study and debate of issues and policies confronting the nation, ordinarily is impossible to implement in contemporary times. Populations have grown too large for direct democracy, which remained only an ideal until the formulation of the concepts of people's
Paralleling the swift and fundamental domestic transformations Qadhafi initiated upon coming to power in 1969 were equally radical and controversial foreign policy changes. King Idris had been pro-Western, quiescent if not passive, and scarcely interested in pan-Arab issues. Qadhafi, in contrast, was markedly anti-Western, highly activist, and a strong advocate of Arab unity. Although Qadhafi's internal policies could be ignored or tolerated by the rest of the world, regardless of their radicalism, his foreign policies elicited strong resentment and widespread condemnation from many quarters. Even the so-called "progressive" or revolutionary regimes in Algeria, Iraq, and Syria that supported some of Qadhafi's policies opposed his maladroit diplomacy, rhetorical excess, and provocative tactics.

Allegations of Qadhafi's involvement in subversive activities were numerous. Over the years, Libya has been accused of subversion by several Arab countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. For example, Libyan agents reportedly planned on several occasions to disrupt the pilgrimage at Mecca in Saudi Arabia. And for many years Libya supported the mostly Christian rebels in southern Sudan, who are led by John Garang, as against the central government in Khartoum. Many observers linked Libya's lack of restraint in foreign affairs with its oil wealth, which paid for foreign adventures while keeping the domestic population content.

By disregarding the rules of the international political game, Libya became so ostracized and isolated that when the United States bombed Libyan cities in April 1986, only a few countries condemned the action strongly. Potential friends in the Arab world were already alienated by the constantly changing pattern of Libyan alliances.

Nevertheless, Libya was subject to certain practical limitations. Its oil revenues were dependent on the world market and subject to inflationary pressures. Although well armed, Libya's military was undermanned, unable in most cases to support foreign policy initiatives by force. Libyan foreign policy was not so erratic and disjointed as it appeared, however. Instead, it was consistent with, and in large part based on, the initially proclaimed ideals of the Revolution and the developments that followed.

Libyan foreign policy grew from the historical legacy of colonial domination, Nasser's philosophy, and most important, the creation of Israel. Qadhafi's concept of foreign relations has been determined to a large extent by his implacable hatred of Israel and his desire to destroy it. The policy of eradicating Israel either shapes or takes precedence over his ideology. For example, Qadhafi advocates Arab unity not only for ideological reasons, but because of his conviction that a unified Arab nation would be capable of defeating Israel militarily.

Qadhafi's worldwide support of revolutionary and insurgent movements
evolved in part from the sponsorship and funding he provided to Palestinian organizations that fought against Israel. Moreover, Qadhafi's antipathy toward imperialism derives less from Libya's struggle against Italian colonialism than from the perceived creation of Israel by the United States and European powers. And, although Qadhafi espouses nonalignment, he has advocated a close Arab relationship with the Soviet Union as a means of obtaining arms to defeat Israel and excoriated the United States because of its support of Israel.

Libyan foreign policy is not, however, dictated entirely by opposition to Israel. Libya's activism in Africa and the Mediterranean basin is motivated by a desire to be a regional power. In the 1980s, Libya's reckless and adventurous intervention in the Third World was driven by Qadhafi's desire to disseminate his Third Universal Theory and his personal aspirations for worldwide recognition.

Qadhafi has been a leading proponent of Arab unity (qawmiya), calling for a union that would stretch from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. He believes that the members of such a union would have complementary resources: oil and other minerals, manpower, and space for population expansion. Apparently, Qadhafi views this union as taking the form of a strong federation, similar to those of the United States and the Soviet Union, rather than as a unitary state. Qadhafi has said that "it is ironic to see that Americans and Soviets, who are not of the same origin, have come together to create united federations, while the Arabs, who are of the same race and religion, have so far failed to realize the most cherished goal of the present Arab generation." Whether each Arab country's borders are considered sacrosanct or "natural" in some historical sense, over time, particularistic nationalisms have proved too powerful to be superseded by Arab unity.

Pursuing unity on a step-by-step basis, Qadhafi has sponsored or joined ill-fated mergers with Egypt, Syria, and, most recently, Morocco. He also has called on Sudan, Algeria, and other countries to participate in unity schemes. Since 1969 there have been seven unity attempts, all except one initiated by Libya. Less than four months after Qadhafi's coup d'état, Libya joined Egypt and Sudan in signing on December 27,
1969, the Tripoli Charter, which called for the formation of a "flexible federation." On January 1, 1972, the Federation of Arab Republics, consisting of Egypt, Syria, and Libya came into existence. Yet another merger, accepted in principle in August 1972, between Egypt and Libya theoretically took effect on September 1, 1973. The union failed, however, because of disagreements over the timing and objectives of war and diplomatic alternatives to the conflict with Israel. In early 1974, a merger of Libya and Tunisia was proclaimed, only to be repudiated two days later by President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia. Looking once again toward the Mashriq, Qadhafi and President Hafiz al Assad of Syria proclaimed a unity of their two countries on September 10, 1980. In 1987, however, the unity provisions existed only on paper because neither side was willing to surrender its sovereignty.

Turning his attention to his weak neighbor to the south, Qadhafi in 1981 proposed a merger plan with Chad. Goukouni Oueddei, then in power in N'Djamena, rejected the proposal and this merger plan, like all previous plans, failed to materialize. Since then, Libya's involvement in the Chadian civil war has deepened.

Obsessed by the goal of pan-Arab unity, Qadhafi tirelessly, albeit thus far ineffectively, continued to seek partners. On August 13, 1984, a marriage of convenience between Libya and Morocco was consummated with the signing of the Oujda treaty. At the time of the treaty, Qadhafi was at odds with all the Arab states except Syria and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), so the agreement signaled an end to Libyan isolation and revived Qadhafi's ambitions of pan-Arab leadership. The treaty also restored Qadhafi's hope of extending the union to include Algeria and Tunisia as well as Syria. Such a scheme, he thought, could be the nucleus of a more complete pan-Arab union. Not surprisingly, dissolution of this union came as abruptly as its formation. The visit of Shimon Peres, Israel's prime minister, to Morocco in July 1986 provided the main reason for the estrangement.

Despite the failure of unification attempts, Qadhafi condemn Arab leaders who for various reasons opposed such schemes. Because they worked against his purported goal of achieving unity, Qadhafi's resorts to subversion, threats, and meddling in the internal affairs of others proved unsuccessful and costly. Qadhafi's methods have alienated potential cooperators, frightened possible Arab union candidates, and, in the last analysis, isolated Libya in regional affairs. With ambitions of their own, and with differing agendas and priorities, Arab governments have learned, at best, to tolerate the Libyan leader. Many resent his self-appointed role as philosopher-leader of all Arabs. Few, if any, are by temperament given to impetuousness; therefore, they oppose Qadhafi's sudden radical policy shifts. Nevertheless, the pan-Arab thesis championed by Qadhafi, that strength increases with unity, is still valid. It is also widely shared as a goal among Arabs, notwithstanding the aforementioned difficulties.
The Mediterranean basin is an area of major importance to Libyan military and political policy. Soon after the revolution, Libya called for the conversion of the Mediterranean Sea into a neutral "sea of peace" through the removal from the area of all foreign naval fleets and military installations, particularly North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bases. Libya repeated the call at the 1973 Algiers conference of the Nonaligned Movement, and other countries, including neighboring Tunisia and Algeria, have supported the idea.

The keystone to Libya's Mediterranean neutralization policy is Malta. During the Anglo-Maltese negotiations in 1972 covering British bases on the island, Libya offered economic assistance to Malta if it would exact a pledge that the bases would not be used again to fly supply missions to Israel (as they had been used during the 1956 Suez Canal crisis and the June 1967 War). The ruling Labour Party government of Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff negotiated such an agreement, and Libyan-Maltese economic relations began to expand. Libya encouraged immigration by Maltese workers, and Malta provided technical training for Libyans.

Libyan-Maltese relations, on the whole, have been cordial. In the 1980s, Libya generally perceived Malta's foreign policy as positive and friendly. Nevertheless, the issue of maritime boundaries between the two countries remained an irritant. It was finally resolved in mid-1985 when the International Court of Justice at The Hague ruled in favor of Libya. As a result of this decision, Malta lost eighteen nautical miles to its southern neighbor.

While pursuing relations with Malta, Libya continued to develop its overall Mediterranean policy. In mid-1975, Libya and Turkey concluded several cooperative agreements and decided to establish a joint ministerial committee. Plans were formulated to increase the number of Turkish workers in Libya from 6,000 to 60,000 by the end of 1976. The wave of expulsions of foreign workers in the fall of 1985, was evidently politically motivated as some 130,000 people--primarily Egyptians, Tunisians, and Mauritanians--were expelled. Some 50,000 Turkish workers remained in Libya, however, alongside 15,000 workers from the Democratic Republic of Korea (South Korea) despite the obvious closeness of those two countries to the West generally and the United States in particular.

Libyan relations with Cyprus and Greece have been largely harmonious. Late in 1973, Libya established diplomatic relations with Cyprus. Archbishop Makarios, then president of Cyprus, visited Libya in June 1975, where he recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs. In early 1976 and again in mid-1977, Greece and Libya signed economic and technical cooperation pacts. They also agreed to establish a joint
Although some analysts classify Libya as part of the Maghrib, only the province of Tripolitania shares a common history and culture with other Maghribi countries. The lack of a Maghribi heritage, together with the revolutionary government's predilection for Mashriq affairs, has caused the Maghribi area to be of secondary interest to Libya since 1969. In 1970 Libya withdrew from the Permanent Maghribi Consultative Committee, an organization founded by the Maghribi states to foster the eventual development of an economic community. Nonetheless, Libya pursued an active foreign policy toward the Maghrib, a policy that usually revolved around the issues of Arab unity and the Western Sahara dispute.

During a December 1972 visit to Tunisia, Qadhafi publicly called for its merger with Libya. Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba rejected the idea and chided Qadhafi for his youthful naiveté. In January 1974, only a few months after the failure of the Libyan-Egyptian merger, Qadhafi pursued a new unification plan during a meeting with Bourguiba at Jerba. Bourguiba first accepted the proposed Arab Islamic Republic, but then reversed his decision. He later stated that he had agreed only to the concept of eventual Maghribi unification, not to any specific bilateral union at the time. Relations subsequently deteriorated and became more strained in 1975, when Tunisia supported the partition of the Western Sahara territory by Morocco and Mauritania.

In March 1976, Libya began expelling several thousand Tunisian workers. Later the same month, Tunisian authorities announced the discovery of a plot aimed at high government officials (perhaps even Bourguiba) and alleged that Libya was involved, despite Qadhafi's denials. Tunisia later accused Libya of providing military training to opponents of the Bourguiba regime. Now and then, Tunisia (as well as other neighboring countries) has protested against alleged Libyan subversion attempts. In 1976, for instance, Tunisia charged Libya with attempting to assassinate Prime Minister Hadi Nouira. And in February 1980, Libya was accused of instigating the abortive uprising by Tunisian insurgents in the town of Gafsa in central Tunisia, a charge that Libya promptly denied. Nevertheless, diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed.

As Tunisia's economic and political difficulties grew in the 1980s, dissent became more vocal, particularly in the poorer southern region, paving the way for increasing the links between the Jamahiriya and the Tunisian dissidents. Two issues caused problems for the Libyan-Tunisian relationship. The first, concerning maritime boundaries between the two North African countries, was settled by an International Court of Justice ruling in favor of Libya in 1982. The Court reaffirmed its ruling in 1985, at which time it rejected Tunisia's appeal for reconsideration. The second
problem resulted from the expulsion from Libya in August 1985, of 40,000 Tunisian workers, partly as a result of the downturn in the Libyan economy as a result of shrinking oil revenues. The expulsions were also partially based on political considerations because Qadhafi has considered expulsions a political weapon with which to threaten uncooperative governments. In retaliation, Tunisia expelled 300 Libyans, including 30 diplomats.

In the early months of 1987, there were signs of improvement in Libyan-Tunisian relations. In March, Major Khuwayldi al Hamadi spent three days in Tunisia as official guest of the government and met with President Habib Bourguiba, Prime Minister Rachid Sjar, and other high-ranking officials.

Libya's closest Maghribi bilateral relationship has been with neighboring Algeria. Both countries share similar revolutionary Arab ideologies, state-controlled economic systems, and Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil policies, and both have undertaken Third World leadership initiatives. Furthermore, both countries have comparable relations with the United States and the Soviet Union. Algeria has concentrated on internal development, however, whereas Libya has pursued internal development and external activities almost equally. The two countries' bilateral ties were strained by Libya's 1974 attempt to merge with Tunisia, Algeria preferring to have its borders shared by relatively weak states rather than by states that have been strengthened and enlarged through unification.

Although Libya and Algeria have been allies on the Western Sahara issue, differences in their positions became increasingly pronounced in late 1978. Both countries originally had pressed for Spanish evacuation from the area and supported the local independence group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Frente Popular por la Liberacion de Saguia el Hamra y Rio de Oro--Polisario) toward this end. Algeria wanted the area to become an independent state. Libya felt Arab unity would be better served if the area merged with a larger state, preferably Mauritania, with which it had close relations at the time (Libya had been the first country to recognize independent Mauritania; Mauritania was the first country to recognize Libya's revolutionary regime.) Libya opposed the forceful repression of Western Saharan nationalism, however, and when Morocco and Mauritania decided to partition the area by force (Morocco obtaining the larger share), Libya joined Algeria in supporting Polisario's struggle against the two partitioning countries. Together with Algeria and thirty-six other countries, Libya has recognized the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), formed in Algeria in 1976. Libya also supported the SADR's bid for membership in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), along with twenty-five other African states.

Libyan-Moroccan relations have, on the whole, been unfriendly. A wide gulf separates moderate, monarchist, pro-Western Morocco from the revolutionary, pro-Soviet Jamahariya. Rabat has often protested Tripoli's attempts at subversion, for example, during the 1971 military coup.
attempt. Morocco's foreign policy goals have usually been at odds with those of Libya. Qadhafi, for instance, denounced Moroccan assistance to the government of Zaire when rebels staged an invasion from neighboring Angola. In an abrupt about-face, however, Morocco signed the Oujda treaty in August 1984, which called for unity with Libya.

For Morocco's King Hassan II, the union restored the regional Maghribi balance of power, which had tilted in favor of Algeria, Morocco's main rival and the primary supporter of the Polisario. Algeria consistently supported the right of Western Saharan to self-determination in the SADR. The SADR was proclaimed on February 27, 1976, one day after the Spanish withdrawal. King Hassan put forward his country's claims over the former Spanish-ruled territory, led 350,000 of his citizens in 1975 on a peaceful "Green March" to key areas in the Saharan territory, and subsequently occupied the former Spanish colony.

In view of their sharp ideological differences, the accord between Qadhafi and King Hassan was evidently the result of expediency. The king expected to persuade the Libyan leader to cease supporting the Polisario and wanted access to Libyan oil. For his part, Qadhafi regarded Morocco as a source of human resources and support. Apparently, Qadhafi stopped his support of the Polisario, albeit only temporarily.

Libya's very active interest in sub-Saharan Africa has been directed toward isolating Israel diplomatically, liberating African countries under colonial or apartheid regimes, providing economic aid to developing African countries, and propagating Islam. During 1972 and 1973, through bilateral relations and membership in the OAU, Libya and other Arab states successfully reversed Israel's formerly strong diplomatic position in Africa. Qadhafi drew a parallel between Israeli occupation of Arab territory and colonialism in Africa and frequently offered significant economic assistance to countries that would sever ties with Israel. By November 1973, twenty-seven African governments had broken relations with Israel, many declaring their support for the PLO in the process.

Libya also has supported numerous black African independence movements, although the extent and nature of the support have not always been clear. Libyan support apparently was significant for Angola (where aid was first extended to Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola, and only later to Agostinho Neto's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which defeated Roberto's group in a civil war), Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique in their struggles against Portuguese colonialism. Libya continued to contribute funds to liberation efforts throughout 1978. Some sources report that nationalist guerrillas of both Zimbabwe and Namibia have received direct Libyan aid.

For some time, Libya has had a special, if not always smooth,
relationship with Uganda. Libya supported the government of Idi Amin in exchange for Uganda's severance of relations with Israel. (A particularly close bilateral relationship had existed between Israel and the Ugandan regime Amin overthrew in 1971.) Libya came to Uganda's assistance in 1972, and again in 1978, when it airlifted troops and supplies, thus demonstrating a certain degree of logistical capability. The aid proved militarily futile, however, as Libyan troops were routed quickly. For a brief period, the deposed Idi Amin found asylum in Tripoli.

Libya's relations with Sudan, like relations with virtually all other Arab and African countries, fluctuated. Initially, Libya supported Sudanese President Jaafar an Numayri against an unsuccessful leftist coup attempt in 1971. Libya turned over two of the top communist plotters to the Sudanese authorities, who executed them shortly afterward. However, a year later Sudan accused Libya of involvement in three successive coup attempts and severed diplomatic relations. Relations began improving by the fall of 1977, as Numayri and Sudanese opposition leaders began a reconciliation. In February 1978, Libya and Sudan agreed to resume relations but relations soon became strained after Qadhafi condemned Sudanese support for President Anwar al Sadat of Egypt and for the Camp David accords of September 1978.

Libya was particularly annoyed by the steadily improving relations between Sudan and Egypt during the closing years of the Numayri regime, which culminated eventually in an Egyptian-Sudanese integration charter that provided Egypt with an air base in Sudan that could serve as a counterweight to Libyan regional power. Feeling threatened by the Cairo-Khartoum alliance and its alignment with the West, in August 1981 Qadhafi formed the Tripartite Alliance with Ethiopia and South Yemen PDRY, each of which was aligned closely with the Soviet Union.

After Numayri's fall from power in April 1985, Sudanese-Libyan relations improved. Qadhafi ended his aid to the Christian and animist, southern-based, Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by Garang and welcomed the incoming government of General Sawar Dhahab. In July 1985, a military protocol was signed between the two countries, and Qadhafi was the first head of state to visit the new Khartoum government. Qadhafi then strongly supported Sudanese opposition leader Sadiq al Mahdi, who became prime minister on May 6, 1986. Nonetheless, the initial euphoria was subsequently replaced by Sudan's search for a truly neutral regional and global stance. With regard to the Chadian conflict, for instance, Mahdi's government declared its neutrality and asked that Libyan forces be withdrawn from Sudanese territory. Prime Minister Mahdi's attempts to mediate the Libyan-Chadian conflict have so far proved unsuccessful, although delegations from the warring factions have met several times during 1986 and 1987, under Sudanese aegis.

In 1975 Libya occupied and subsequently annexed the Aouzou Strip a 70,000-square-kilometer area of northern Chad adjacent to the southern
Libyan border. Qadhafi's move was motivated by personal and territorial ambitions, tribal and ethnic affinities between the people of northern Chad and those of southern Libya, and, most important, the presence in the area of uranium deposits needed for atomic energy development.

Libyan claims to the area were based on a 1935 border dispute and settlement between France (which then controlled Chad) and Italy (which then controlled Libya). The French parliament never ratified the settlement, however, and both France and Chad recognized the boundary that was proclaimed upon Chadian independence.

Qadhafi became entangled in factional rivalries among the various Chadian groups. In the late 1970s, it appeared as though Libyan ambitions were being achieved. Goukouni Oueddei, a member of the Tebu Muslim tribe in northern Chad, was installed as president in April 1979 with Libyan support. In January 1981, the two countries announced their intention to unite.

Goukouni's overthrow in 1983 led to further Libyan involvement in Chad. From his Libyan exile, Goukouni reorganized his forces and occupied the strategic northern town of Faya Largeau. As the conflict drew in other players, particularly France, Chad was in effect a partitioned country. With French help, the N'Djamena government of Hissein Habré controlled the southern part of Chad. The area north of the sixteenth parallel, however, was controlled by Goukouni and his Libyan backers. According to the terms of a September 1984 treaty, France withdrew its forces from Chad. Libya, however, decided to keep its troops there, and skirmishes and fighting continued intermittently.

The stalemate in Chad ended in early 1987 when the Habré forces inflicted a series of military defeats on the Libyans and their Chadian allies, at Fada, Ouadi Doum, and Faya Largeau. The press engaged in considerable speculation on the repercussions of these humiliations on Qadhafi and his regime. It was reported that Goukouni was being kept forcibly in Tripoli, and that, as a result of some disagreements with the Libyan leader, he was wounded by a Libyan soldier. Qadhafi's position had clearly been weakened by these developments, and the long-term fighting in Chad aroused discontent in the Libyan army as well.

During the 1980s, Libyan relations with Western Europe and the United States have been generally strained. In the preceding decade, however, relations were relatively cooperative. Although the new regime required the closing of British and American military bases in Libya in 1970, its strident anticommunism pleased the Western powers. This policy orientation was confirmed in 1971 when Libya supported Sudanese President Numayri against an unsuccessful leftist coup attempt. And at the 1973 conference of the Nonaligned Movement in Algiers, Qadhafi challenged the validity of Fidel Castro's credentials as a nonaligned...
Qadhafi believed that most West European nations had repudiated their imperialist legacy by the 1970s, a conviction that paved the way for increased trade, if not for cordial political relations. Libyan ties with Western Europe were for the most part commercial. The Federal Republic of Germany, for example, was a major purchaser of Libya's petroleum exports. Libya also purchased some military equipment from Western Europe, notably from France. Libya developed extensive commercial relationships with Italy and Great Britain. Commercial ties prospered for pragmatic reasons even as Qadhafi denounced the European Economic Community's trade relations with Israel and with NATO bases in the Mediterranean. On only several occasions have Libyan political considerations overridden the economic imperative, as in 1973 when Libya joined the Arab oil boycott that adversely affected several West European nations. For their part, the West European nations have likewise continued to trade with Libya despite proved Libyan involvement in terrorism on the continent.

Libya developed particularly close relations with France after the June 1967 War, when France relaxed its arms embargo on nonfront-line Middle East combatants and agreed to sell weapons to the Libyans. In 1974 Libya and France signed an agreement whereby Libya exchanged a guaranteed oil supply for technical assistance and financial cooperation. By 1976, however, Libya began criticizing France as an "arms merchant" because of its willingness to sell weapons to both sides in the Middle East conflict. Libya later criticized France for its willingness to sell arms to Egypt. Far more serious was Libya's dissatisfaction with French military intervention in the Western Sahara, Chad, and Zaire. In 1978 Qadhafi noted that although economic relations were good, political relations were not, and he accused France of having reverted to a colonialist policy that former French president Charles de Gaulle had earlier abandoned.

In the 1980s, Libyan-French discord centered on the situation in Chad. As mentioned, the two countries found themselves supporting opposite sides in the Chadian civil war. In late 1987, there were some French troops in Chad, but French policy did not permit its forces to cross the sixteenth parallel. Thus, direct clashes with Libyan soldiers seemed unlikely.

Italy was one of Libya's major trading partners in the late 1970s. Relations with Italy, however, have been somewhat mercurial. In 1973 Libyan aircraft strafed an Italian combat vessel patrolling an area in the Mediterranean where an earlier dispute had led to the detention of Italian
fishing trawlers. Libya officially apologized for the strafing incident and relations improved in 1974 with Jallud's visit to Italy and the conclusion of several commercial and technical agreements. However, there were three more incidents involving Italian fishing boats operating near the Libyan coast in December 1975. Earlier that year, British press reports alleged that Libya was funding radical Italian political groups.

Despite these frictions, relations improved in 1975 because agreement was reached regarding compensation for property lost when Italians left Libya under pressure after the 1969 revolution. A major commercial transaction was completed in December 1976; Libya purchased more than 9 percent of the stock of the Fiat Company, placing 2 representatives on Fiat's 15-member board of directors in the process. Increasing pressures were brought on Fiat, Italy's largest privately owned firm, by the Italian government and Western interests to buy back Libyan-owned stock shares, which by 1986 amounted to a 15.2-percent share in the firm. The Libyan government-owned Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company agreed to divest itself of the stock in September 1986, presumably to generate revenue of over US $3 billion to compensate for lower Libyan oil revenues.

Britain's relations with postrevolutionary Libya were strained because of the close political, economic, and military relationship the British had cultivated with King Idris. After Qadhafi came to power, Britain suspended sales of military equipment, and Libya nationalized British Petroleum's interests, ostensibly in retribution for perceived British complicity in the Iranian occupation of three Persian Gulf islands. Libya supported Malta during that country's negotiations regarding British military base leases. Libya also allegedly supported the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Nevertheless, in an October 1978 address in Tripoli, Qadhafi stated that there were no differences so severe as to preclude the establishment of good relations with Britain.

However, British-Libyan relations deteriorated markedly during the 1980s. A critical point was reached in 1984 when a British policewoman was killed by a gunman inside the Libyan People's Bureau (embassy) in London. This incident led to the breaking of diplomatic relations. Further discord followed the arrest of six British citizens in Libya, evidently in retaliation for the arrest of four Libyans in Manchester on charges stemming from March 1984 bombings in London and Manchester. Relations plummeted when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher permitted United States aircraft to use British bases on April 15, 1986, for a strike on Libyan cities.

In the 1980s, Qadhafi came to regard the United States as the leader of
Western imperialism and capitalism. He vigorously condemned several United States policies—including military and economic support for Israel and support for a political settlement in the Middle East; resistance to the establishment of a new world economic order between resource producers and consumers; and support for relatively conservative, Western-oriented countries of the Third World, particularly Arab and African states. Since the Revolution, United States-Libyan relations have been limited to relatively modest commercial and trade agreements.

Libya has attempted to influence the United States through American oil companies operating within Libyan boundaries. Constant pressure on the companies concerning pricing and government participation eventually resulted in the Libyan state's assumption of a controlling interest in some firms and nationalizing others. The United States was the primary target of the oil boycott that Libya and other Arab states invoked after the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

In addition to conflicts caused by Libyan oil policies, the United States and Libya have disagreements over Libyan claims to territorial waters. Since 1973 Libya has considered the Gulf of Sidra as territorial waters. Beyond that, Libya claimed another twelve nautical miles (approximately twenty kilometers) of territorial waters. The United States refused to recognize Libya's claim, and this refusal became a recurrent cause for contention between the two countries. Under President Jimmy Carter, the United States armed forces were ordered not to challenge Libyan claims by penetrating into the claimed territory, even though relations deteriorated when, on December 2, 1979, the United States embassy in Tripoli was burned by demonstrators apparently influenced by the takeover of the United States embassy in Tehran. President Ronald Reagan's administration, however, was determined to assert the principle of free passage in international waters.

In 1981 President Reagan began taking action against Libya. On May 6, 1981, the Reagan administration ordered the closing of the Libyan People's Bureau in Washington, and twenty-seven Libyan diplomats were expelled from the United States for supporting international terrorism. Then, on August 19, 1981, two Libyan SU-22 fighters were shot down by United States F-14 jets during naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra. In December President Reagan called on the approximately 1,500 American citizens still living in Libya to leave or face legal action. In March 1982, oil imports from Libya were embargoed and technology transfer banned. In January 1986, Libyan assets in the United States were frozen as part of a series of economic sanctions against Libya.

United States-Libyan tensions erupted in April 1986. On April 5, Libyan agents planted a bomb in a Berlin nightclub frequented by United States service personnel. The explosion killed 2 people, 1 an American serviceman, and injured 204 others. In retaliation, on April 15, the United States launched air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi. As a result, a number of Libyan civilians, including Qadhafi's adopted infant daughter, were killed. Observers speculated that the attack was intended to kill the
Libyan leader himself.

The air strikes were certainly intended to encourage the Libyan military to overthrow Qadhafi. However, the air strikes were opposed by virtually all segments of the population, who rallied behind their leader. Moreover, not only did Qadhafi thrive on the public attention but his determination to stand up to a superpower threat appeared to have enhanced his stature. Even the major opposition group abroad, the LNSF, denounced the use of force by foreign powers in dealing with Libya, as did the London-based Libyan Constitutional Union. In 1987, a year after the raid, it was still unclear whether the raids had succeeded in countering terrorism. Observers were not certain whether Libya had actually adopted a new policy with regard to supporting terrorism, which seemed to have diminished considerably, or merely learned how to avoid leaving fingerprints.

Libya actively used regional and international organizations in pursuit of its foreign policies. Indeed, independent Libya was established in large part by UN actions. A member of the UN and most of its specialized agencies, Libya frequently brought such matters as colonialism and racism in Africa, Western imperialism, and North-South economic relations before the General Assembly. Libya also used the UN as a forum in which to attack Zionism and the state of Israel. Libyan pressure was a primary factor in the acceptance of the PLO's representation of the Palestinian Arabs at the UN. Libya took an active part in UN affairs. For example, in November 1975, Qadhafi called for the abolition of the veto right held by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The following year, the Libyan press singled out United States' use of the veto for special criticism. Also in November 1975, the Libyan agriculture minister demanded the expulsion of the United States and Israel from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. In March 1978, Libya took strong exception to the posting of UN peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of that area. The Libyan position, according to a GPC communique, was that "any acceptance of UN forces in the land adjacent to our occupied Palestinian land...[would mean] acceptance of the Zionist presence and the bestowing of legitimacy on it."

Libya Table of Contents


-------. Libyan Studies: Select Papers of the Late R.G.


------. *My President, My Son--or one day that changed the history of Libya*. Valetta, Malta: Adam, 1974.


**Libya 360°**

**NOTE**


Although we possess more knowledge today, particularly with regards to Libya's relationship to imperialism and Western nations, that bypass inaccuracies in the text, there is still value in this book as a basic introduction and overview of this often misunderstood nation and its rich and complex history.

Alexandra Valiente
January, 2012