not of organization generally but specifically of the unitary state as conceived in the modern period, and tribes as such are not the most important. Patricia Crone suggests that tribes and states are not sequential stages but alternative answers to the problem of security. There is a great deal of truth to this notion, though the two entities often cannot be empirically separated. It is also true that those who hope tribal egalitarian values in the Middle East will by themselves ease a "transition to democracy" are likely to be disappointed. Yet the suggestion that tribes and the modern state are both "avowedly egalitarian, both espouse mass participation," perhaps obscures the main question now faced by those involved.[83] Certainly, large numbers of men sometimes turned out when tribe was pitted against tribe. Certainly, also, tribes are as egalitarian as Weber's rational state and its sovereign law that applies to everyone. Nevertheless, the individualism of the tribal scheme was predicated, and still is, on its indefinite divisibility. That of the nation-state, by contrast, is predicated on an absolute moral unity. The serial individuals who make up the people are potentially a mass in a way that tribes never were or could be; and the prince who aimed entirely to abolish tribes in favor of a simple identity between state and people would face problems concerning which neither Machiavelli nor Ibn Khaldun provides adequate guidance.

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Tribe and State:
Libyan Anomalies
Lisa Anderson

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In most of the modern Middle East the primacy of the state in the exercise of national political authority is acknowledged by governments and citizens alike. Fidelity to kinship ideologies and genealogies may supplement, subvert, or bypass state institutions at the national level or serve in their stead at the local level, particularly where state penetration is weak; but tribal loyalty is not ordinarily considered a legitimate alternative to the bureaucratic state as a mechanism for political conflict resolution and economic appropriation. Among the few exceptions to this general proposition appear to have been the governments of Libya under King Idris, who ruled from 1951 until 1969, and Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi, who came to power in a military coup in 1969. Very different in foreign-policy posture, avowed economic orientation, and social and cultural policy, these regimes nonetheless shared a remarkably similar aversion to reliance on state institutions and ideologies for political legitimacy and loyalty. This aversion was a reflection of the weakness and ultimate failure of both indigenous and colonial efforts at state building in Libya during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Far from being eroded by the growth of state institutions, tribal affiliations not only remained strong but also continued to present a genuine challenge to acceptance of the state as the primary vehicle

for economic distribution and conflict resolution. Tribal imperatives were interpreted in different terms under the monarchy, which emphasized the cohesion and exclusiveness of kinship, and the revolutionary regime, which also embraced the more general principles of egalitarian participation and abhorrence of economic specialization; but both regimes turned to the idiom and reality of the tribe to win support and maintain authority.

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This aversion to statehood and reliance on tribal ideologies reflected widespread sentiment in Libya, but it was the particular economic position of the country that permitted the translation of sentiment into policy. As Jacques Roumani, an astute observer of Libyan politics and social life during the twentieth century, has noted, "Oil riches and a small population permit [Libya] to avoid the need for a differentiated social structure to cope with the complexities of the modern age."[1] That Libyans should want to dispense with modernity was a legacy of their recent history; that they were able even to try was a product of their contemporary economy.

Definitions

Before examining Libya itself, it is worth spending a few moments on questions of terminology, for, as several of the contributors to this volume point out, the terms tribe and state are eloquent in their ambiguity. Most of the scholarly concern to correct (or at least examine) the attendant confusion has been addressed to the first of these terms, and for anthropologists, what is a tribe? is a well-worn question. Less familiar, but no less pressing, is the question what is a state? For the purposes of this essay, both terms may be understood as what Richard Tapper calls tendencies or situations.[2] That is to say, tribe and state are not mutually exclusive analytical categories but rather summaries of characteristics more or less present in any society at any moment.

It seems useful to start with the general proposition that all societies have mechanisms by which surplus is extracted and distributed and by which conflict is regulated. These mechanisms may be embedded in other expressions of social life, such as kinship, in which case questions of economic appropriation and conflict regulation are resolved on the basis of rights and obligations described in terms of descent and genealogy. By contrast, mechanisms for extraction, distribution, and regulation may also be represented in a structurally differentiated and specifically designated apparatus; such an apparatus is a state. The existence of a state implies that other aspects of social organization are also differentiated, as should be evident in reliance on impersonal contractual relations and the appearance of a complex division of labor and correspondingly elaborate social hierarchy. In societies where such characteristics are absent, a specifically designated structure for economic appropriation and conflict regulation is both impossible and unnecessary.

Within both the tribal and the state tendencies or situations there is, of course, great diversity. Both tribes and states frequently exhibit

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what may be characteristics exogenous to their underlying rationale. Insofar as tribes manifest differentiated structures for appropriation and conflict regulation, such as chieftaincies, or states rely on the ruler's kin to staff the administration, for example, it is the predominant tendency rather than the categorical and exclusive presence or absence of tribal or state attributes that must be considered as characterizing the society.

Although the two categories are not, therefore, in any rigorous sense mutually exclusive, since the nineteenth century Western social and political theory has treated tribe and state as inversely correlated. Implicit in the nineteenth-century idea of progress inherited by the Western development theorists of the postwar era is the notion that the modern state appears and develops at the expense of the tribe. Although Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and their various followers were all skeptical about the benign outcome of this evolution, few disputed its reality. Capitalism, division of labor, industrialization, bureaucratic domination, and social differentiation appeared to be inevitable challenges to the egalitarianism of primitive communism, the substantive justice of traditional authority, and the security of mechanical solidarity.

Thus it appears to be widely accepted that once capitalism and rational-legal bureaucracy have been unleashed, over the long run tribe and state can coexist only temporarily and uncomfortably. Indeed, insofar as they are both understood as mechanisms for the distribution of resources and the regulation of conflict, coexistence produces redundancy. What this essay is about, however, is the historical short run or, more precisely in the Libyan case, the twentieth century. It is here where the anomalies that challenge simple interpretations of change in the modern world are to be found. As it turns out, the triumph of the state, however much it may be inevitable, should not be heralded (or lamented) prematurely. As reexaminations of European history have reminded us, the victory of the state over alternative structures of political authority was neither quick nor easy. On the contrary, European history is littered with the corpses of empires—holy and otherwise—burgs, duchies, and leagues defeated by the embodiment of political authority sanctified in the Treaty of Westphalia and defined by Max Weber as a "compulsory political association with continuous organization [whose] administrative staff successfully upholds a claim to the monopoly of legitimate use of force in the enforcement of its order...within a given territorial area."[3]

In the three centuries after Westphalia the juridical basis of the international system, of which the state is the basic unit, was elabo-

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rated and exported throughout the world. With the founding of the League of Nations after World War I and, even more so, the establishment of its successor, the United Nations, after World War II, statehood was designated as the sole internationally recognized form of political authority. At that time less than a century of European influence separated many parts of the world from submission to forms of political authority profoundly different from the European-style

state. Participation in the international system, however, dictated adoption of the regalia, if not the reality, of statehood. Territorial boundaries were drawn, or more likely inherited, from European imperial cartographic designs. Armies were recruited—and it should be remembered that the modern standing army is the archetypical embodiment of the functionally differentiated, hierarchical, bureaucratic, impersonal mechanisms of the state. Ambitious programs were announced, and sometimes implemented, to increase production, enhance infrastructure, develop economies, improve the quality of life, and otherwise dramatically alter the nature of societies around the globe. That these programs were undertaken in the name of states on behalf of citizens both strengthened the image of the state as the tendency of modernity, progress, and wealth and made it the focus of the bitterness of the disappointed, the frustrated, and the angry.

The fact that state formation and economic development inevitably entail damage to the beneficiaries of the old system, and rarely deliver goods and services to new and expectant recipients as smoothly and efficiently as promised, accounts in large measure for the failure of the state to take root as easily and completely as was expected by early theorists of development. For the new citizens who are angry and disappointed—those who were dispossessed, ignored, and neglected by the state's development planners—there have been numerous ideological alternatives. Like the American Shakers and English Luddites of the nineteenth century, the twentieth century has seen its share of movements of righteous withdrawal and refusal. Not least of these, in the Middle East and elsewhere, have been efforts to revive and sustain fidelity to ideologies and loyalties based on actual or putative ties of kinship in the face of the challenge from the state.

Were this the story in Libya it would certainly be worth telling, but it would hardly be unique or even unusual. Libya presents a variation on this common theme in that it is the state elites themselves—the government development planners—who display ambivalence toward the organization and ideology of the state. Possessing, if nothing else, the sanction of international recognition, these regimes

nonetheless evinced profound distrust of the instruments in their hands, preferring to appeal to what they appear to have believed were the more reliable idiom and obligations of kinship. It is the how and why of this to which we now turn.

Libya's Encounter with the Modern State

Like almost all the peoples of the Middle East, and with some justification, Libyans believe themselves to have been ill-served by the twentieth century. The area now known as Libya entered the century as the last North African province of the failing Ottoman Empire.[4] It had been exposed to the reform efforts of the Ottoman rulers since the middle of the nineteenth century, and although it was hardly a model province, neither was it a sleepy backwater. Indeed, it appears that the late nineteenth century was a period of relative peace and prosperity. Whether directly, as in western Libya or Tripolitania, or in

conjunction with the Sanusi religious order in Cyrenaica, the eastern region, the Ottoman administration secured law and order and increased the provision of services such as education. Libyans participated in the Ottoman local government and provided many of the incumbents of the local administrative bureaucracy. At the same time, both because of the enhanced political climate and because of the increased importance of Libya as the last outlet of trans-Saharan trade after the French and British occupations of Tunisia and Egypt in the 1880s, merchants found themselves prospering. Local trade increased, pastoralism began to give way to settled agriculture, and tribal networks were supplemented, and partially supplanted, by links of economic interest and political ideology.

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 shook Libya, as it did the rest of the empire, and the Libyan political elite was thrown into turmoil as the supporters and opponents of the new regime battled for bureaucratic advantage. Well before the dust settled, the province was shaken again: in 1911 Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire and invaded the North African territory. When forced to sue for peace a year later, the Ottomans did not acknowledge Italian sovereignty but rather gave the inhabitants "autonomy." In fact, Ottoman influence remained important in Libya until the closing days of World War I, by which time battles for control of the province among the Italians, the Ottomans, and provincial leaders had severely weakened the local administration and economy.

The aftermath of World War I saw a number of local efforts to create independent states in the territory, including the short-lived Tripoli Republic and the Sanusi government. The Sanusis, under the

head of the order, Idris, found a protector in the British in Egypt, who briefly sponsored negotiations between the Italians and Idris. By 1922, however, the new Fascist government in Rome had decided to forego negotiation and undertake the military conquest of the territory. In one of the most brutal colonial wars of the twentieth century the Italians took control of the territory kilometer by kilometer, facing fierce resistance for more than a dozen years. Whole villages were uprooted, wells were poisoned, civilian settlements bombed, and captured resistance fighters hanged on the spot.

By the mid-1930s, when Italian control was finally undisputed, the Libyan population had been halved by famine, war, and emigration. Particularly significant was the loss of almost the entire educated elite and much of the entrepreneurial merchant class. Settled coastal agriculture and domestic trade had been disrupted, and many of those Libyans who did not find employment with the Italians returned to pastoralism. Whatever damage to the economic and social infrastructure built up by the Ottoman administration that remained to be done would be completed shortly: the North Africa campaigns of World War II left Libya in French and British hands after a series of long and destructive battles.

During the war the British in Egypt promised Idris, who had fled into exile in Cairo in 1922, that Cyrenaica would not be returned to Italian control if he would provide troops from among his followers to fight with the Allies. After the war this promise proved decisive in the debates over the future of Libya.

The newly established United Nations was unable to agree on a suitable mandatory power, and so Libya became independent in 1951, with Idris as king. At that time it was the poorest independent country in the world: the million or so inhabitants disposed of an annual per capita income of about fifty dollars, and the literacy rate among adult males was about 20 percent.

The Monarchy

During much of the first half of the twentieth century Libyans found themselves forced to rely on ties of kinship faute de mieux . Other bases of social cohesion, such as economic interest and political ideology, rely on a market economy and state structure like that which had appeared briefly at the end of the nineteenth century, only to be destroyed. Many of the Libyans who had thrown in their lot with the new commercial and administrative networks at the turn of the century had seen their fortunes and families decimated, and the survivors drew the conclusion that the only reliable connections were

those of kinship. The federal system with which Libya became independent was, therefore, a compromise between the demands of the international system for a state and the inclinations of a domestic population skeptical of the utility and reliability of bureaucratic administration and commercial exchange. The elaborate and expensive government, underwritten by the United States and Great Britain in return for military basing rights, had the advantage of permitting local politicians considerable leeway while giving the country the appearance of national unity.

Obviously, the demands of statehood—the maintenance of a civilian bureaucracy, for example, if only to serve as local interlocutor for foreign economic interests such as the oil companies—require a more complex and elaborate administration than can be sustained by tribal structures alone. Yet in the Libya of the 1950s there were few persons with skills, experience, or confidence in bureaucratic administration. The earlier efforts at state building—on the part of the Ottomans, the Sanusiyya, the Tripoli Republic, and even the Italians—to construct and maintain more elaborate administrations were all short-lived experiments that had ended in horrifying failure. Small wonder, then, that enthusiasm for the state-building venture was conspicuously absent, and that the ideology of kinship remained prominent in both the formal and informal workings of the government. At the formal level the importance of kinship was enshrined in the constitution, which stated that "the sovereignty of the United Kingdom of Libya is vested in the nation. By the will of God, the people entrust it to King Muhammad Idris al-Sanusi and after him to his male heirs, the oldest after the oldest, degree by degree."[5] Informally, of course, the rejection of the impersonal norms of the state went much further. Political parties were banned shortly after independence, and politics was the contest of family, tribal, and parochial interests, as networks of kinship and clan provided the organizational structures for competition. As Ruth First described it, "The inner conclave of the King and its parallel system of authority was unwritten in the constitution, but it was this court government of trusted advisors and confidants among the tribal nobility, together with a judicious

selection of townsmen picked for their loyalty to the monarchy and their complicity with this system of patronage, that ran the political system."[6] Thus, rather than rely on recruitment based on ideological loyalty or administrative competence, the monarchy delegated authority to locally powerful families. Notable families consolidated their positions by intermarriage, and there were numerous prominent figures whose marriages better accounted for their appointment to government positions than did their qualifications. The

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World Bank reported in 1960 that among the obstacles to economic development was "the prevailing attitude towards appointments to government jobs, which are frequently made on the basis of personal friendship or family connections rather than merit."[7]

In his still-unsurpassed study of the political elite of the Libyan monarchy, Hasan Salaheddin Salem distinguished between the tribe and the family as vehicles for recruitment into the political elite. Both were important during the monarchy: "The tribal element constituted an integral part of the political leadership during the period 1952-1969," and many Libyans believed that "several families controlled the country and determined the destiny of its people throughout the period." Indeed, among the adherents of this view was Idris's successor as the Libyan head of state, Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi: "In the heat of his campaign for his 'Socialist Union'... Gaddafi stressed the end of family rule and family influence in Libyan politics."[8]

The relationship between family and tribe is complex, for reliance on family may constitute compromise with the state. Although both reflect the importance of kinship, strictly speaking, tribal criteria for resource allocation and conflict regulation compete with those of the formal institutions of the state—the tax and welfare agencies, the police, and the courts. Attachment to the smaller-scale networks of family do not necessarily contradict and, in certain historical circumstances, may even complement those institutions. Family relationships may represent a conceptual bridge and social insurance policy in transitions from exclusive or nearly exclusive reliance on kin to participation in the more complex webs of commercial and political relations of commercial and administrative life.[9] In Libya, in both the late nineteenth century and again in the 1950s, the appearance of prominent families representing tribes marked the dilution of ideologically egalitarian tribal organization and the transition to market- and bureaucracy-based clientelism for distribution and regulation. Whether family politics is understood as merely an extension of, or a departure from, tribal organization, reliance on kin is in principle inconsistent with the impersonal norms of the bureaucracy and the market. Thus, as a compromise with the state, it must be understood as transitional, although of course—and here Libya's unusual wealth played a critical role—the transition may be quite prolonged.

By 1960 the contradiction had led to crisis. The king felt obliged to issue a letter to the heads of department throughout the state administration complaining that "matters have come to a climax, as have deafening reports of the misconduct of responsible state personnel in taking bribes—in secret and in

public—and in practicing

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nepotism—the two [evils] which will destroy the very existence of the state and its good reputation both at home and abroad, as well as the squandering of the [country's] wealth in secret and in public."[10] Nepotism is only evil, of course, when nonkin criteria for favor or advantage (such as the formal equality, achieved competence, and objectively assessed merit associated with the bureaucratic state) are being violated. Thus, by making the favoring of kinfolk an evil, the king, perhaps in spite of himself, acknowledged the contradiction between the state and tribal tendencies.

Part of the reason why the mechanisms by which resources are allocated had become a major political issue was the discovery in 1959 of substantial oil reserves. Oil company exploration activities had already brought significant revenues into the Libyan economy; in less than a decade per capita income was to reach fifteen hundred dollars. The inability of the monarchy to address the "deafening reports of misconduct" or distribute the oil revenues on terms considered equitable by either state or tribal criteria eventually led to its demise. Its balance of state and tribal tendencies was probably inherently unstable, however. Unable by the facts of international politics to rely solely on tribal support, the regime was required to establish and maintain bureaucratic organizations, which, by their nature as state institutions, were supposed to be equally responsive to all individuals, defined not as tribal members but as citizens. In creating and fostering an ideology of legitimacy based on the formal impersonal relations of civil equality, government policy eroded the position of the tribes. Yet such state institutions were deeply mistrusted by large and important segments of the population, including the king. The successor regime would use increased oil revenues to sustain a reinterpretation of tribal obligations and state imperatives, which emphasized their intersection in an ideology of nationalism and egalitarianism.

The Revolution

That a conservative monarchy would be caught in the dilemma of trying simultaneously to win favor with the more traditional elements of society while promoting developments, both political and economic, that undermined the social base of traditional political organization is not unusual. It is a position shared by most monarchies, surviving and defunct, in the modem world. More unexpected perhaps is the extent to which this ambivalence is equally evident in the avowedly revolutionary regime that followed.

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The Libyan monarchy never had the opportunity to resolve the contradiction between its dual attachments to tribe and state; it was overthrown in the military coup led by Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi in September 1969. That the monarchy was overthrown by military officers and that they chose to rule themselves rather than oversee installation of a new civilian government reflected, in

Libya as so often elsewhere, the extent to which the military represented the archetypical and almost sole embodiment of formal impersonal hierarchy in the country. Qaddafi's near contempt for such military organization was not immediately evident; that he appreciated military power but not military hierarchy was to be suggested only later when he attempted to disband the army in favor of "arming the people." At the very outset, however, Qaddafi was obviously and profoundly ambivalent about tribes. Early on he made it clear that he was simultaneously opposed to tribalism as a principle of political organization and proud of his own origins in a saintly, though not noble or wealthy, tribe, the Qadadfa.

Almost from the start the new regime attempted to abolish tribal organization. In general, the other members of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), who had made the coup with Qaddafi, held no particular brief for tribal loyalties. They themselves were not from noble or prestigious tribes, and they viewed the tribal support for the old regime as lending itself to counterrevolutionary and conservative politics. Thus, the regime decreed the abolition of the tribe as a legal institution and redrew the local administrative boundaries that had followed tribal lines so as to include sections of several tribes in each of the new administrative units. According to Omar El Fathaly and Monte Palmer, who conducted field research in rural Libya in the early 1970s, "this restructuring was followed, in turn, by the dismissal of all local officials including governors, mayors, and deputy mayors, most of whom had been tribal sheikhs or their relatives; and replacement by a new class of local administrators whose values and social origins were compatible with those of the RCC, that is, educated members of less prestigious tribes with no ties to the old elite structure."[11]

Nonetheless, despite the early efforts of the regime to eradicate political reliance on tribal affiliation and replace it with ideological loyalty, tribal relationships retained much of their importance. Indeed, within a decade of coming to power, and as his regime faced increasing political opposition, Qaddafi himself had fallen back on reliance on his own kinsmen. He had entrusted a cousin with his personal security, and two brothers, also his cousins, not only served as his personal envoys in sensitive foreign missions but also held impor-

tant positions in domestic intelligence. Still another cousin was commander of the armed forces of the central region, which included the oil terminals and the disputed Gulf of Sidra.

Not surprisingly, the Qadadfa did not fail to take advantage of their privileged position to enrich themselves. By the end of the 1970s per capita income had reached eight thousand dollars a year, and even during the oil glut and fall in prices of the following decade revenues remained substantial for a population of little more than three million people. In an ironic echo of the king's earlier protests about nepotism, in the autumn of 1985, Qaddafi apparently decided his relatives' behavior merited a rebuke. In an unsigned article in the newspaper Jamahiriyya , which bore the unmistakable imprint of Qaddafi's own pen, the

Qadadfa were warned, "Mu'ammar does not belong only to the Qadadfa tribe but is the son, the father, the cousin, and the uncle of all revolutionaries."[12]

The ambivalence illustrated in the inconsistent recruitment practices of the regime is also evident in Qaddafi's own writings. During the late 1970s he published the three slim volumes of what he called The Green Book , where he expounds the third universal (or international) theory, so called to distinguish it from both communism and capitalism. It is the basis of the jamahiriyya , or state of the masses, in which Libyans were supposed to be living and through which they were supposed to be ruling themselves. The first volume, The Solution to the Problem of Democracy , does not contain much explicit discussion of the issues of tribe and state, although the direct participatory democracy he advocates has struck many observers as reminiscent of tribal practices. Indeed, Jacques Roumani described the revolution as "a reassertion of hinterland culture in national life." As he put it, "politically, this means rejection of central authority and state institutions in favor of direct participation in the affairs of society, operating by consensus or mediation."[13]

The evocation of tribal relationships is more apparent in the second volume of The Green Book , on economics. Here Qaddafi advocates a sort of precommercial or subsistence-based "primitive communism." His own words are worth quoting at length:[14]

> The sound rule is: He who produces is the one who consumes. Wage workers are a type of slave, however improved their wages may be. The wage-worker is like a slave to the master who hires him ....
>
> The ultimate solution is to abolish the wage system, emancipate man from his bondage, and return to the natural law which defined relationships before the emergence of classes, forms of government, and man-made laws....

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> Natural law had led to natural socialism based on equality among the economic factors of production and has almost brought about, among individuals, consumption equal to nature's production. But the exploitation of man by man and the possession by some individuals of more of the general wealth than they need are a manifest departure from natural law and the beginning of distortion and corruption in the life of the human community.
>
> Land is no one's property, but everyone has a right to use it, to benefit from it by working, farming, or pasturing [Qaddafi's italics].

Qaddafi's notion of the natural economy has its parallel in his view of natural social organization. Once again, his own words, here from the third volume, The Social Basis for the Third Universal Theory , are worth quoting:

> To the individual man, the family is of more importance than the state....
>
> Mankind, as a matter of fact, is the individual and the family, not the state.
>
> The state is an artificial economic and political system, sometimes a military system, with which mankind has no relationship and nothing to do....
>
> A tribe is a family which has grown as a result of procreation. It follows that a tribe is a big family. Equally, a nation is a tribe which has grown through procreation. The nation, then, is a big tribe....
>
> Since the tribe is a large family, it provides its members with the same

material benefits and social advantages the family provides for its members, for the tribe is a secondary family. What needs to be emphasized is that the individual might sometimes act in a disgraceful manner which he would not dare do in front of his family. But since the family is smaller in size, he can escape its supervision, unlike the tribe whose supervision is felt by all its members. In view of these considerations, the tribe forms a behavior pattern for its members which will be transformed into a social education which is better and more human than any school education.

The only apparent disadvantage of the tribe, from Qaddafi's point of view, seems to be that "tribalism damages nationalism because tribal allegiance weakens national loyalty and flourishes at its expense." The state, by contrast, has only one possible merit: it may be the political expression of nationalism. Indeed, as I have suggested elsewhere,[15] Libya's experience with Italian nationalism and monarchical corruption may be the best, perhaps the only, illustrations of Qaddafi's observation:

The national state is the only political form which is consistent with the natural social structure. Its existence lasts, unless it becomes subject to another stronger nationalism, or unless its political structure,

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as a state, is affected by its social structure in the form of tribes, clans, and families. It is damaging to the political structure if it is subjected to the family, tribal, or sectarian social structure and adopts its characteristics.

Qaddafi may well be correct that it is damaging to the state to be subjected to criteria of recruitment and legitimacy drawn from tribal society; if so, he himself is partly to blame for the weakness of the Libyan administration, the incapacity of its military, and the discontent of its citizenry.

Qaddafi hoped to transcend the contradiction between tribe and state through nationalism and egalitarianism. The nation, whose political form is a state, he construes as a big tribe, familiar and nurturing. Similarly, the equality implied in citizenship he understands as the egalitarianism of natural law and natural socialism. Over the long run, this resolution of attachment to tribal values, hostility to the state, and the demands of the international political economy is not markedly more stable than the vacillation of the monarchy between condemning and employing nepotism. What gave it staying power was the extent to which it captured popular sentiment and, through the idiom of nationalism and egalitarianism, gave it ideological respectability. Moreover, oil revenues attached immediate and tangible benefit to adherence to both nationalism and egalitarian-ism; what were in fact very conservative positions were, so interpreted, neither embarrassingly reactionary nor materially costly.

Eventually, however, the stagnant, if not reactionary, implications of Qaddafi's ideology, combined with declining oil revenues, produced concern about the future among many Libyans. Maintenance of the delicate balance between tribe and state has consumed the energies of the regime and, for all its professions of revolutionary fervor, it has done little—indeed, given its ideological agenda, can do little—to foster sufficient political and economic development to

guarantee that the current high standard of living will be sustainable when oil runs out in the twenty-first century.

Tribe and State

We have seen how the independent Libyan regimes, in their different ways, confounded tribe and state and how such amalgamation may influence Libya's future since it does not bode well for conventional nation-state formation and development. The final question here is why —why has Libya been unusually vulnerable to the nonstate, or even antistate, political ideologies of tribal life, and why does the transition postulated by the development theorists seem to have been suspended here?

The answer to the first part of the question has already been suggested: Both the monarchy and the revolutionary government drew heavily on tribal practices and ideologies in recruiting staff and justifying their rule because that is what they and their compatriots believed to be most trustworthy. The unusually strong emphasis on tribal relations and the explicit hostility toward state structures reflected the turmoil in Libya in the twentieth century and the resulting disappointment and distrust in the state.

If Libya's discontinuous experience with state formation during the twentieth century was unusually severe, however, it was not unique. What permitted the Libyan regimes to translate a sentimental longing for a mythical golden age when life was simpler into actual government policy was oil revenues. Jacques Delacroix provides a useful conceptual perspective from which to understand the impact of oil. He argues that in the absence of domestic extraction the principal function of the state is distributive; the relation between the elite and the mass is not the class relation usually associated with a complex division of labor, societal differentiation, and the hierarchical structure of the state. He suggests that as a consequence,

> other structures of social solidarity will have to be activated. Alternative structures are, by default, traditional structures. The more recently incorporated into the world economy a society, the more available are its traditional social structures. Hence, a distributive state ruling a recently incorporated society will experience a maximum of tribal, ethnic, and religious challenges.[16]

Traditional structures have more advantages than mere familiarity, however important that may be. Certainly in the Libyan case, the emphasis on kinship during the second half of the twentieth century was not due solely, or even principally, to the recentness of incorporation into the world economy. That might be enough to account for the reliance on kinship among conservative or traditional monarchies, but as Qaddafi's efforts to blend radical, revolutionary rhetoric with glorification of the tribe suggest, there is more to the Libyan case. The Libyan fidelity to kinship ideologies constituted a rejection of the state and a refusal to accept its criteria for social and political organization.

This refusal, as Roumani put it, to "cope with the complexities of the modern age" is a luxury afforded by oil. The transition from the tribal situation to

the statehood dictated by the international system has been suspended, and the suspension prolonged, by oil revenues. No doubt Libya will eventually be forced to come to terms with its statehood, and only at that point will the true costs of today's refusal be apparent.

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Conclusion: Tribes and States in Islamic History

Albert Hourani

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The discussions in this volume range over a wide variety of subjects and ask questions which are interrelated in complex ways. It may, therefore, be useful to try to disentangle these questions, to ask them again, and to indicate the kinds of answers which emerge from the book as a whole.

Four kinds of questions have been asked. What is a tribe in the Muslim world? What is a state in the Muslim world? What has been the role of tribes in the formation of states as well as in their maintenance and destruction? What role has Islam played in these processes? That is, has it played such a role as to give them a specific nature which differs from that of what may seem to be similar processes in parts of the world where the people are not Muslims?

First of all, what is a tribe? The word can be used to indicate two kinds of entity, and these should be distinguished from each other. There is what might be called a natural phenomenon of rural society, whether pastoral or agricultural: the formation of more or less permanent cooperative groups, such as herding units or villages, because of the need for certain types of cooperation in the migration of pastoral groups, the operations of plowing and harvesting, the periodic redistribution of land, and sometimes defense. Such groups, bound together as they are by proximity and cooperative activities, tend also to be linked by kinship through either common descent or intermarriage. These kinship bonds arise because of the group's isolation from others, the need to keep land in a family, or the need to establish binding personal relations with those with whom one has common interests; kinship turns relationships of daily life and common interest into warm affective and moral bonds.

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At certain times and places, however, there have existed larger units than village or herding group, and it is for these that the term tribe (or fraction of a tribe) has commonly been used. A tribe has certain characteristics. It has some kind of solidarity, which is intangible and may seem to disappear for a time but which is always present and may become effective in certain circumstances. These larger groups are not held together by genuine kinship; few people in illiterate societies know their ancestors more than three or four