



Libya: From Colony to Independence

Ronald Bruce St. John

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Libya is a state which, for the majority of its past, has been subjected to foreign rule or influence. Falling prey to empire builders from the ancient Greeks to Mussolini's Italy, it only became formally independent in 1951. In the past half-century, Libya's history has been dominated by the figure of Mu'ammarr al-Qaddafi, the controversial leader who Nelson Mandela has dubbed one of the revolutionary icons of our time. St John skillfully navigates this lengthy historical period, detailing the struggles the state has had in finding its political and economic position in the world. From the early Greek settlements in the fifth century BC to the infamous Lockerbie bombing, this study is a thoughtful and enlightening introduction to the land which bridges Africa and the Middle East, and which though reviled by the West for decades as a repressive and hostile regime, is starting to seek a political détente. Ronald Bruce St John is an affiliate professor of Middle East Studies at the Institute of International Studies, Bradley University. An analyst for Foreign Policy in Focus, he is the author of Qaddafi's World Design: Libyan Foreign Policy, 1969-87.

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