

## Eccentricity and Repression Marked Gadhafi's Rule

Difficulty:

**A**VERAGE

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### *Discussion activities to be done after completing this EA lesson*

Today's report is about Libya under the rule of its former leader, Moammar Gadhafi, who was recently killed. What was life like? How was Gadhafi seen? Was he effective? How was his reputation damaged? What did he do to repair it?

### *Extension discussion topics*

#### **A. Talking about and going over the specific topic / idea / issue in listening text**

*Introduction = What kind of ruler does the report say Gadhafi was? What was his influence inside and outside of Libya? What kind of reputation did he have?*

1. What does the report say about Gadhafi's way of ruling Libya?
  - His political philosophy was Jamahiriya, Arabic for "the state of the masses".
  - He encouraged people to organize councils to govern themselves in his Green Book, but in fact did not allow people to govern themselves at all.
  - It was one-man rule. There were no institutions.
2. What does the report say about Gadhafi's influence outside his country?
  - Very effective on the international stage.
  - Used his country's oil and gas wealth to gain influence.
  - His reputation was tarnished by his ties to terrorism (Pan Am flight bombing, German night club bombing), but he eventually renounced terrorism and regained some of his international influence.

How much influence did Gadhafi have in your country?

3. What kind of reputation does the report say Gadhafi had? What did he do to encourage this image?
  - Eccentric: flashy accessories, rambling speeches and female bodyguards.
  - Symbol of unity of Libya.
  - Promoter of Arab pride, Arab unity - tried to unite Arab countries.
  - Resistant to democracy.
  - Foolish.

What kind of reputation did Gadhafi have in your country? What has been the reaction to his death?

## B. Expanding on (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

*Topic = Libya.*

1. What do you know about Libya's geography? What countries it is bordered by? (Egypt to the east, Sudan to the southeast, Chad and Niger to the south, Algeria and Tunisia to the west.) Which sea is to its north? (Mediterranean Sea.) Can you name any cities in Libya? What is the capital city? (Tripoli.)
2. Look at a map of Libya. (You can look up Libya in Googlemaps, for example.) What do you notice about the placement of its cities? Why do you think the cities are organized the way they are? Why are there not cities spread out all over the country?
3. Large oil reserves were discovered in Libya in 1959, allowing one of the poorest countries to develop into a very wealthy state. Based on what you heard in the recording, how fairly do you think this wealth has been distributed? How do you think things would have developed differently in Libya if this oil did not exist?

*OR, Topic = Libyan culture.*

Find out all you can about one of the following and give an oral presentation of your findings to a partner or to your teacher: Libyan food, the languages of Libya, famous Libyans abroad.

## C. Extending discussion of (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

*Topic = The Arab Spring and other protests.*

1. The Arab Spring is a term used to describe a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests occurring in the Arab world that began on Saturday, 18 December 2010. The first country to be affected was Tunisia. Do you know how the revolution began there? What role did Mohamed Bouazizi play?  
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed\\_Bouazizi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_Bouazizi))
2. What are some of the major complaints of participants in demonstrations, protests and revolutions in the Arab Spring? (lack of self-governance, lack of jobs, inability to improve one's life, etc.) Are there similar problems in your country? Are people protesting about conditions? To what extent do you think the protests have been brought on by the world recession? Do you think such protests can make a difference?
3. How has the Arab Spring been shown in the media in your country? Do people there generally support the efforts of Arab Spring protesters? Is your country affected by the Arab Spring?

## Audioscript

Moammar Gadhafi was just a 27-year-old army officer when he took power in 1969 after a military coup against Libya's king.

He quickly gained an outspoken reputation, highly critical of the West. He no longer wore a military uniform, he played up his Arab pride and tried to unite the Arab world. Later, his flashy accessories, rambling speeches and female bodyguards made him an eccentric leader on the world stage. Jerrold Post, at the director of the political psychology program at George Washington University: "We tend to focus on his eccentricities, but having said that, for the most part he has been really rather effective, especially on international platforms."

Gadhafi created a social, political and economic system called "Jamahiriya," Arabic for "the state of the masses." He outlined his philosophy in his famous Green Book. He called for a country without institutions, run by the people and led by him. But Daniel Serwer of the Middle East Institute says it never worked that way.

"He was somebody who taught the Libyans that they should form councils to govern themselves. He didn't allow them to govern themselves. It was one-man rule."

Serwer says Libya's oil and gas wealth gave Gadhafi influence at home and abroad. He stashed away the riches for himself and his closest allies.

"He also became a symbol of unity of Libya, which had been kind of cobbled together from different pieces."

Ties to terrorism tarnished Gadhafi's international image. The U.S. blamed him for a German nightclub bombing in 1986 that killed two U.S. servicemen.

In 2003, Gadhafi took steps to reconcile with the West. He admitted responsibility for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 that killed 270 people in Lockerbie, Scotland. He also renounced weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. In turn, the U.S. removed components of Libya's nuclear program from the country, dropped sanctions and restored diplomatic ties.

But at home earlier this year, thousands of Libyans rebelled against Gadhafi's authoritarian rule.

They joined the Arab Spring and demanded he step down. He responded with a violent crackdown.

Soon much of the world was against him, too. The United Nations issued sanctions. NATO launched air strikes.

But Gadhafi refused to leave.

"There is a conspiracy to control the Libyan oil, to control the Libyan land and to colonize Libya again. This is impossible, impossible and we will fight until the last man and woman to defend Libya."

It was always about him, Daniel Serwer and Jerrold Post say. "He has this internal image of himself, perhaps another way of saying this is that his major audience is the mirror on his wall. And he's saying, 'Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the greatest Pan-African, Muslim, third-world leader of them all?' And he finds ways of reassuring himself that the audience... the answer keeps coming back, 'You are Moammar.'"

"It'll be a legacy of autocracy, of resistance to democracy. Of... really, foolishness and delusional foolishness for many people."

In the end, Moammar Gadhafi, the young army officer of nomadic parents, who touted himself as a unifier, unified many Libyans against him.

JulieAnn McKellogg, VOA News, Washington.