

FACTS AND FIGURES

Area: Kingdom)	274,000 sq km (slightly bigger than the United
Population:	8.8 million (1989 estimate)
Population growth rate:	2.7 per cent per annum
Main ethnic groups:	Mossi, Peul, Lobi, Mandé, Bobo, Gourounsi, Gourmantché, Sénoufou
Life expectancy:	48 years
Climate:	Three climatic zones: the Sahelian (north), maximum annual rainfall 300 mm; Sudano- Sahelian (central), max. rainfall 300-600 mm; Sudano-Guinean (south/south west), rainfall 600- 1200 mm.
Religion:	Traditional animist 60 per cent, Moslem 30 per cent, Christian 10 per cent (all approximate)
Languages:	Official language: French. Main national languages: Mooré, Dioula, Fulfuldé
Capital:	Ouagadougou (pop. 500,000). Other towns: Bobo Dioulasso (250,000), Koudougou (54,000), Ouahigouya (40,000)
Currency:	Franc CFA = 100 centimes (under a fixed exchange rate, 50 FCFA = 1 French franc)
National budget:	FCFA 100 billion (£200 million) (1988 est.)
Average income:	£135 p.a. per capita
Exports:	Gold, raw cotton, livestock, shea nuts, hides and skins, sesame seeds
Foreign debt:	£480 million (at 1 January 1988). Debt service as a percentage of export earnings, 1987: 12.7 per cent (due), 7.8 per cent (paid)

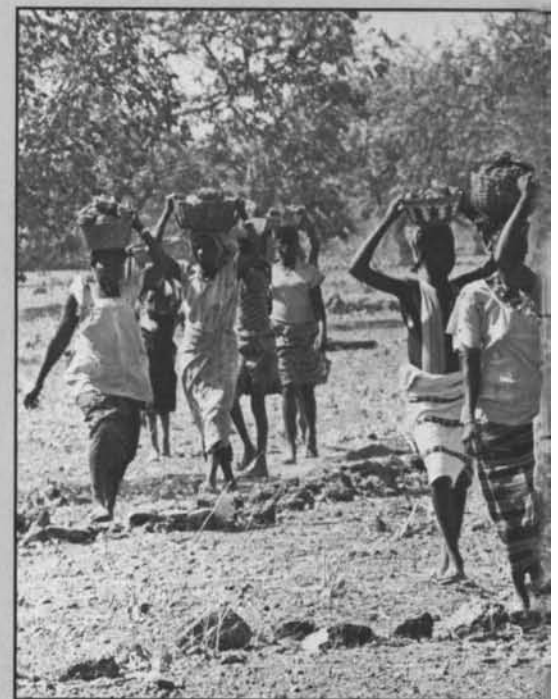


(Jeremy Hartley/Oxfam)



Preparing the evening meal in Titao village: the leaves of the baobab tree will go in the sauce which flavours the tô.

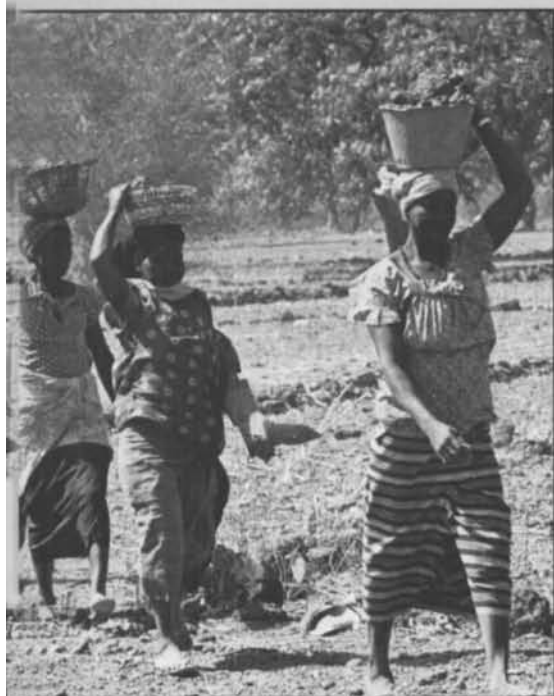
(Jeremy Hartley/Oxfam)



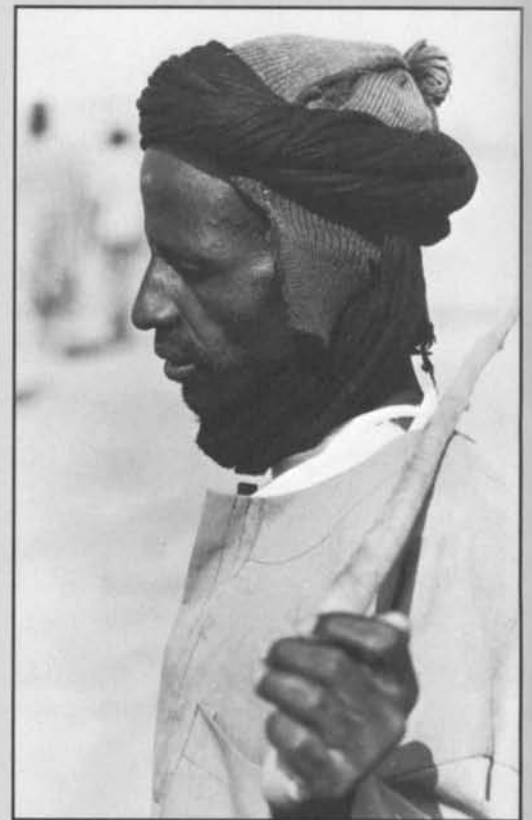
(Mark Edwards/Oxfam)

DATES AND EVENTS

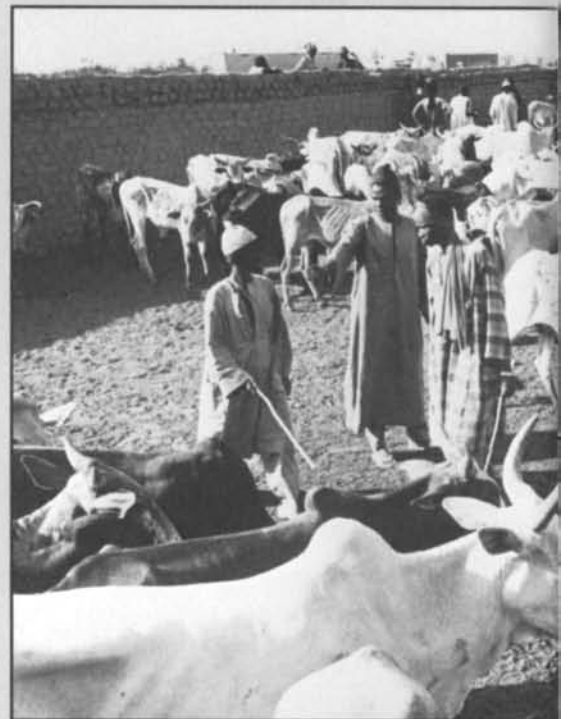
- 1100-1400 An early branch of the Mossi people arises north of the River Niger and captures Timbuktu (1337) and other lands, before being finally defeated by Moslem forces of the Songhai empire.
- Late 1400s Naaba Oubri founds the Kingdom of Ouagadougou, marking the beginning of the Mossi empire.
- Mid-1500s Kingdom of Yatenga founded by a nephew of Naaba Oubri. The Kingdom of Ouagadougou, under one of his sons, is strengthened with a surrounding ring of principalities. The Mossi empire is consolidated over the next 350 years until the French colonial occupation.
- 1740s Severe drought
- 1830s Great famine called Zogoré provokes mass migration southwards from Yatenga.
- 1896 French troops march into Ouagadougou. Naaba Koutou, called Wobgo ('the Elephant Emperor'), escapes to exile. All the territory of present-day Burkina becomes part of French West Africa.
- 1913 Severe drought causes the 'Famine of Naaba Koabga'.
- 1914-18 World War I: conscripts from present-day Burkina and other French territories are sent to fight in the trenches.
- 1919 France divides its West African territories into two colonies: Upper Volta and French Sudan.
- 1932 Upper Volta is erased from the map when France divides the territory between French Sudan and its other colonies of Niger and the Ivory Coast.
- 1934 Railway from Abidjan reaches Bobo Dioulasso; the French introduce a system of forced labour to obtain workers from Upper Volta for plantations in Ivory Coast.
- 1940s Six years of drought during the decade: 'Famine of Piiss'Wai'.
- 1945 The Voltaic Union, supported by the Mògho Naaba, campaigns for restoration of Upper Volta.
- 1947 Reunification of the colony of Upper Volta.
- 1950s Political parties are formed, and campaign for independence.



- 1960 5 August: Upper Volta becomes an independent state, with Maurice Yameogo the first President of the Republic.
- 1966 Army coup led by Col. S. Lamizana overthrows First Republic.
- 1968 Start of long drought.
- 1970 Lamizana hands over power to a civil regime (under his presidency): the Second Republic.
- 1972/73 Famine crisis with deepening drought; 100,000 people believed to have died in the Sahel, and millions of cattle and sheep.
- 1974 Army coup dissolves the Assembly; Lamizana remains President.
- Dec 74-Jan 75 First border war between Upper Volta and Mali.
- 1977 A new Constitution is promulgated, heralding a return to democracy: the Third Republic.
- 1980 Coup d'état by Col. Saye Zerbo; downfall of Third Republic. Constitution suspended.
- 1981 Return of drought after respite in late 1970s.
- 1982 Zerbo overthrown by military coup which installs Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo as President, heading Council for the Salvation of the People (CSP).
- 1982/83 Drought becomes acute: driest years this century.
- 1983 10 January: CSP designates Captain Thomas Sankara as Prime Minister.
17 May: CSP leadership arrests Sankara, his comrades-in-arms Lingani and Zongo, and others.
27 May: Sankara freed after mass demonstrations in his support.
4 August: Ouédraogo regime overthrown; National Council of the Revolution (CNR) takes power, with Sankara as President and Blaise Compaoré, Lingani and Zongo making up the four 'historic leaders' of the Revolution.
- 1985 Burkina bombed by Malian aircraft. Five-day war: 100 Burkinabès and Malians killed. Ceasefire signed 29 December.
- 1987 15 October: Sankara assassinated, along with 12 aides. Popular Front led by Blaise Compaoré dissolves CNR and calls for popular support. Thousands parade in mourning past Sankara's makeshift grave.
- 1989 Two remaining 'historic leaders' of the revolution, Lingani and Zongo, summarily executed for allegedly plotting a coup.



Touareg man, Djibo cattle market.
(Jeremy Hartley/Oxfam)



Peul, Touareg, and Mossi traders gather in a cattle market at Djibo, Soum province.
(Jeremy Hartley/Oxfam)

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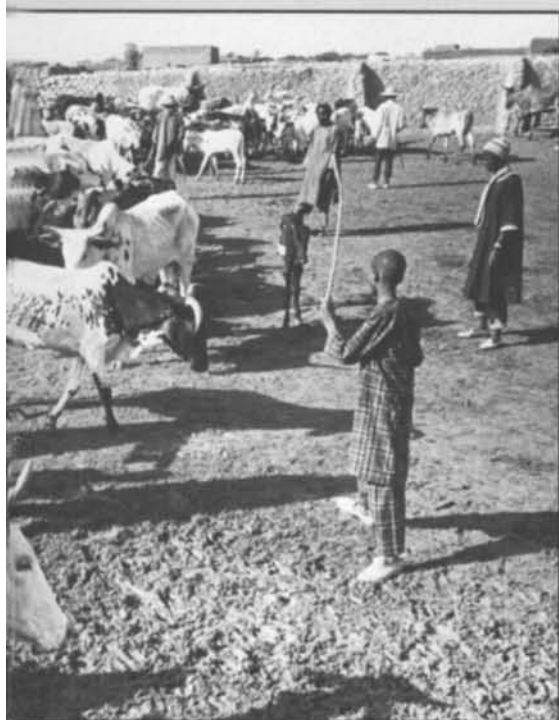
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Robin Sharp was a broadcaster and foreign correspondent until joining Oxfam as a researcher and lobbyist in the mid-1970s. More recently he has been editor of the magazine *Development*, and the organiser of an international conference of non-governmental agencies, the World Food Assembly. He is currently a programme director at the International Institute for Environment and Development, working closely with development groups in the Sahel and other parts of Africa.

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