

UPPER VOLTA

Date of Elections: December 20, 1970

Reason for Elections

The people of Upper Volta were called upon to elect their representatives to the National Assembly which was instituted by the New Constitution of 1970. * Under the transitory provisions of the latter, whose approval by a referendum on June 14, 1970 had marked the restoration of constitutional order in Upper Volta, it was expressly laid down that legislative elections would be held within the 6-month period following that referendum.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Upper Volta, or National Assembly, comprises 57 Deputies elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

Citizens of Upper Volta of either sex, who are no less than 21 years of age may vote, provided they are resident on the territory of the Republic and that they possess their civil rights. They must be registered on the electoral rolls which are revised each year. Voting is not compulsory.

Electors who are no less than 23 years of age may stand for election. Besides persons who are temporarily prevented from registering on electoral rolls on account of a prison sentence, those who, by judicial order, have been deprived of their right to be candidate or have been charged with electoral fraud and those under guardianship, may not stand for election.

The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with ministerial offices and with all salaried offices on the account of a foreign State or International Organization. The mandate is also incompatible with certain high-ranking administrative, judicial, military, police and diplomatic offices. It is also incompatible with managerial positions in companies receiving financial assistance from the State or from a public community and with similar positions in firms controlled by the State; lastly, it is incompatible with managerial positions in companies with exclusively financial aims and which appeal publicly for savings and credit and in companies or firms whose activities

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections*, IV (1969-1970), p. 10.

consist mainly in performing work, loaning equipment or services on behalf of the State, of a community or of a public body or State-controlled company.

Upper Volta is divided into 11 constituencies in which the Deputies are elected by the party-list system with proportional distribution of seats according to the electoral quotient and largest remainder system.

A substitute member is elected with each Deputy and, should the latter die or resign, is called upon to replace him by the President of the National Assembly. However, a by-election is held if a vacancy results from a member being invalidated. Lastly, if one third of the seats in the National Assembly become free as a result of isolated vacancies, a by-election is held unless these vacancies occur in the 6-month period preceding the expiry of the legislature.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Upper Volta's Chief of State, General Sangoule' Lamizana, opened the legislative election campaign on December 5, 1970. " In spite of the inconvenience of the proportional representation system ", he said on that occasion, " the Government has thought it necessary to feel the pulse of public opinion ".

Three national political parties were in the race, together with 4 groups which had roots in certain areas only.

The Democratic Union of Upper Volta, a part of the African Democratic Congress (UDV-RDA), which had been the only party in Upper Volta from January 1960 until January 1966, proposed candidates in the 11 constituencies. The UDV-RDA is the oldest and most well known of the parties in Upper Volta. It has been firmly established in the country since 1946. The National Liberation Movement (MLN), the Opposition party which proposed a policy directed at a socialism " adapted to the realities of Upper Volta " and serving a " positive neutrality ", also had 57 candidates. Lastly, the African Consolidation Party (PRA) which calls itself a Liberal Opposition party also took part in the race in each of the constituencies. Furthermore, the Union for the New Republic of Upper Volta (UNRV), the Kaya Independent Party (UDV-RDA dissident members) and the Yatenga and Koupela Independent Parties only proposed 8, 7, 5 and 3 candidates respectively in the areas where they had roots.

The campaign did not reveal any marked differences between the programmes of the various groups, each of which claimed to be progressive and propounded themes which centered on the quest for social well-being, justice and freedom of speech. The keenest opposition feeling occurred between followers of the UDV-RDA and those of the MNL.

The number of electors who abstained was considerable since participation was calculated at 48.7 % of the registered voters.

After the elections, Mr. Gerard Kango Ouedraogo, a member of the UDV-RDA Party which gained an absolute majority in the Assembly, was asked by General Lamizana to form a new Government. The Cabinet consists of 8 UDV-RDA Ministers, 2 from the PRA and 5 military staff members; under the terms of the Constitution, one third of the portfolios must be assigned to military personnel.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Number of registered voters.	2,395,226
Voters.	1,156,697 (48.7 %)
Blank or void ballot papers.	43,814
Valid votes.	1,112,883

Political Group	Number of Can- didates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in National Assembly
Democratic Union of Upper Volta — African Democratic Congress (UDV- RDA).	57	753,166	57	37
African Consolidation Party (PRA)	57	191,980	21	12
National Liberation Movement (MLN)	57	121,942	12	6
Kaya Independent Party.	7	8,278	4.5	2
Union for the New Republic (UNRV). . .	8	6,540	3	—
Yatenga Independent Party.	5	6,064	2	—
Koupele Independent Party.	3	2,873	0.5	—
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2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

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SSR), Member of the Soviet of the Union; Mr. F. Humblet (Belgium), President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments; Mr. E. Sankale (Senegal), Secretary General of the National Assembly; Mr. S. Shakhder (India), Secretary of the Lok Sabha; Mr. J. Vilfan (Yugoslavia), Deputy.

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HEADQUARTERS

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 1211 Geneva 28 (Switzerland)

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CIDP

Unless otherwise indicated, the publications mentioned below are obtainable from the Centre.

PARLIAMENTS. — A Comparative Study on the Structure and Functioning of Representative Institutions in Fifty-Five Countries (New revised edition). Preface by Mr. G. Codacci-Pisanelli and Mr. A. de Blonay. Pp. 346 (1966). French edition also available. On sale in bookshops and, for members of the Union, at the Inter-Parliamentary Bureau. Sw. Fr. 25.—

Present-Day Problems of Parliament. International Symposium held in Geneva from November 4 to 6, 1965, by the CIDP, under the auspices of the Union.

- 1. Verbatim Report. Introductory reports and debates *in extenso*, in the original language (French or English). Pp. 250 (out of print).
- 2. Official Report. Special issue of the Inter-Parliamentary Bulletin, Introductory reports; synthesis and conclusions of the debates, by Mr. C. Dominice (English and French). Pp. 84.

The Role of Parliament in the Elaboration and Control of Economic Development Plans (English and French). Mimeographed brochure. Pp. 50.

Parliament and Its Means of Contact with Public Opinion through the Press, Radio and Television.

Reports and Debates. Introductory reports and verbatim record of the debates of the 2nd International Symposium, organized in Geneva from December 5 to 7, 1968, by the CIDP, under the auspices of the Union. In the original language, English or French. Mimeographed volume. Pp. 316. 15.

Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections

- I. July 1, 1966 - June 30, 1967.
- Bilingual edition (English-French) 7-
- II. July 1, 1967 - June 30, 1968; *. 10.
- III. July 1, 1968 - June 30, 1969; *. 15.
- IV. July 1, 1969 - June 30, 1970; *. 30.
- \ July 1, 1970 - June 30, 1971;*. 30.

(The elections contained in Volumes II, III and IV are printed on detachable index-cards.)

* French edition also available.