

## SENEGAL

SENGHOR INTERVIEWED ON POSITION IN INTRA-AFRICAN DISPUTES

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[Siradiou Diallo, Bechir Ben Yahmed, Sessen Andrimirado, Abdelaziz Dehmani, Amin Maalouf and Jien-Pierre Ndiaye interview with Senegalese President Leopold Senghor:

"Yes, There Is a Union of Heads of State"--date and place not specified]

[Excerpts] JEUNE AFRIQUE: You met with Sekou Toure in Monrovia in March 1978 to seal another reconciliation. Is this reconciliation sincere and definitive?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I have no reason to suspect Sekou Toure's sincerity. You know he is someone who does not hide his feelings. If he did not want a reconciliation I do not believe he would have pretended to contract one. In any case this reconciliation is in our interests. And I do not see why Senegal and Guinea, which have every reason to cooperate, should not do so. Our exchanges are useful to both countries.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Why did Sekou Toure suddenly become willing to cooperate, when he was not before?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I believe that Sekou is sincere. Before, he sincerely believed that we were conspiring against him--mistakenly, however. He has now realized that there was nothing in this and has changed his attitude toward us. He is an intelligent man. As far as I am concerned, I am confident about the future of our relations.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Whom does the Monrovia reconciliation benefit most: Sekou Toure or yourself?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I believe that both our countries and both our peoples have equal interests in this reconciliation. Before the split our trade exchange was very important. Subsequently, of course, each country has reorganized its trade. It is possible to reactivate it. But for the time being we have only resumed our political relations. It will not be long before economic relations follow suit.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Are you still so pessimistic about the continuing hostilities in the Sahara?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: No, I am less worried than a year ago. Nevertheless, one must remain vigilant, because the hostilities are not yet over, despite the truce declared by the POLISARIO--only with Mauritania and not with Morocco.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Why are you not a member of the OAU's wise-men committee responsible for finding a solution to the Sahara problem?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: Apparently Algeria opposed it. I must say that I did nothing to be appointed. And it is better that I am not a member of it. But in view of President Boumediene's illness, I do not want to discuss the Sahara problem any further. One must behave decently....

JEUNE AFRIQUE: You seem particularly hostile toward Algeria.

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I am not against Algeria. I have friends there, in any case. It is just that our political stances are often different. Senegal and Algeria vote differently in the OAU. But that is no reason for being anti-Algerian. I recently made it known to the government that I was open to discussions.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Are your differences with Algeria purely temporary, that is, linked with the Sahara issue?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: Our differences are not restricted to the Sahara issue. My party has never been Marxist-Leninist but black African socialist and democratic. That is the basis of our differences, which are ideological ones.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Is the intervention force established following the Shaba events not in danger of appearing to be a tool in the hands of one ideology against another?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I am not in favor of an "African intervention force" based on a specific ideology. I had in mind a force based on the historical and cultural geographical divisions acknowledged by the OAU. I would like to see an inter-African force for west Africa to cover the same area as the west African states' economic community, one for central Africa, one for east Africa and, lastly, one for southern Africa. Remember that during the latest OAU summit in Khartoum I called for such agreements to be made. I was not heeded because in fact there is a majority of African leaders who need foreign interventions to hold their position. It is true. One must have the courage to recognize it.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: Everything happening in southern Africa is as if the African states had delegated their task to the British and Americans. Does this mean that the latter must now resolve the problem instead of the Africans?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: No, not at all. The Westerners, and more especially the British and Americans, are in contact with us, both directly and through the intermediary of the OAU, to find a solution. Nothing is done without continuous consultation with the African leaders both with regard to Namibia and with regard to Zimbabwe. I would add--and this is important--that legally, Rhodesia is a British colony and Namibia is under UN protection.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: In other words, you support the Anglo-American plans for Namibia and Zimbabwe?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: Almost all the OAU member states support the Anglo-American plans, particularly since these plans were not drawn up without our knowledge. These plans are the result of consultations with African leaders.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: In view of the reconciliation between Mobutu and Neto, do you not feel that you are in a precarious position, since you still refuse to recognize the Luanda regime?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I do not think I am in a precarious position because I recognized Angola's independence at the time. Indeed, we recognize states, not governments. However, we cannot establish diplomatic relations with a state whose existence depends solely on a foreign army--that is the problem.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: But it is said that Mr Savimbi, who you support, is basically dependent on South Africa. Is it not embarrassing for you to be on the same side as the apartheid government?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I do not aid Savimbi, but I know him and I have a great deal of respect for him. If it is true that he is supported by South Africa there would be nothing surprising about this since in politics, when your back is against the wall, you do not hesitate to treat with the devil. Think of the German-Soviet pact, and then the allies' friendship with the Soviet Union. I think that Angolan leaders should reach an agreement to set up a government of national union. That would spare their country many misfortunes, including occupation by a foreign army.

JEUNE AFRIQUE: What do you think of President As-Sadat's initiative and hence the Camp David agreements?

Leopold Sedar Senghor: I applauded As-Sadat because he showed reckless courage in seizing the bull by the horns to try to find a solution to this fratricidal Middle East war, which has lasted 30 years. Having said this, the Camp David agreements are, in the present situation, merely a first step toward peace. They must be complemented by autonomy, or to put it more precisely, self-determination for the West Bank and Gaza. Palestine is a reality which it is futile to try to deny, as Israel does. As long as the Arabs seek to shut Israel up in a ghetto, there will be no peace in the Middle East; any more than there will be peace if the Israelis persist in denying the right of the Palestinian Arabs to set up a state on the soil of Palestine. We must put an end to the vicious circle of fratricidal war.