

NOVEMBER-
DECEMBER 1983

AFRICA REPORT

AMERICA'S
LEADING MAGAZINE
ON AFRICA

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 6

A Publication of the
African-American Institute

The African-American Institute

Chairman
George N. Lindsay
President
Donald B. Easum

Publisher
Frank E. Ferrari
Editor
Margaret A. Novicki

Assistant Editor
Michael Maren

Editorial Assistant
Jason Zweig

Editorial Secretary
Ellen Brown

Intern
Phil Makotsi

Circulation, Subscriptions, Ad-
vertising, Management, and Pro-
duction Services by Transaction
Periodicals Consortium:

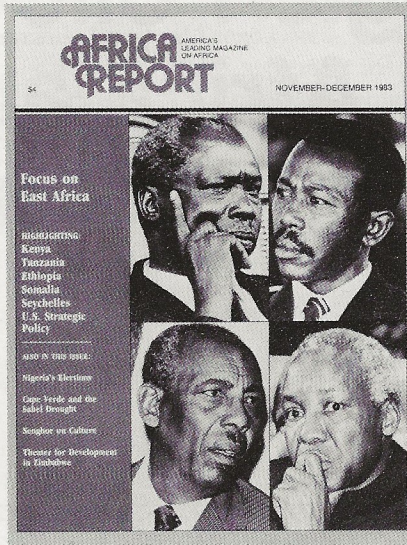
Editors

Alex Fundock III
George P. Bassett

Art

Dena Leiter

Africa Report (ISSN 0001-9836), a
nonpartisan magazine of African
affairs, is published bimonthly in
January-February, March-April,
May-June, July-August, Septem-
ber-October, and November-De-
cember, and is scheduled to ap-
pear at the beginning of each date
period at 833 United Nations
Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017. Ed-
itorial correspondence and letters to
the Publisher should be sent to
this address. Correspondence
regarding subscriptions, distribu-
tion, advertising, and other busi-
ness matters should be sent to
Transaction Periodicals Consor-
tium, Dept. 8010, Rutgers Uni-
versity, New Brunswick, New Jer-
sey 08903. Telephone: (201)
932-2280. Subscription rates: *Indi-
viduals*: U.S.A. \$21, Canada
\$27, air rate overseas \$45. *Insti-
tutions*: U.S.A. \$28, Canada \$34,
air rate overseas \$52. Second-
class postage paid at New York,
N.Y. and at additional mailing of-
fices. POSTMASTER: If this maga-
zine is undeliverable, please send
notice to *Africa Report*, Transac-
tion Periodicals Consortium (ad-
dress above). Telephones: Pub-
lisher (212) 949-5717; Editor
(212) 949-5731. Copyright ©
1983 by the African-American In-
stitute, Inc.



IN THIS ISSUE

This edition of *Africa Report* focuses on East Africa, beginning with an analysis of American strategic policy in the area under the Carter and Reagan administrations, by Larry W. Bowman and Jeffrey A. Lefebvre. From Nairobi, Rick Wells analyzes the September elections and President Moi's efforts to put his own stamp on the Kenyan political scene. John Dimsdale assesses how successful President Nyerere's recent crackdown on "economic exploiters" has been and whether there has been any improvement in the Tanzanian economy. Matt Mann takes a look at the gains of the Ethiopian revolution 10 years later, and Guy Arnold examines the American-Somali alliance in terms of big-power politics in the Horn. Arthur Gavshon speculates on whether recent moves by the Seychellois government indicate a tilt toward the West. And Kimani Gecau, formerly associated with the Kamiriithu theater group in Kenya, explains the Zimbabwe government's approach to theater as a development tool.

From West Africa, we provide an interview with Cape Verde President Aristides Pereira, who discusses his country's economic and political position, as well as his role as current president of the Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel. Léopold Sédar Senghor, former president of Senegal, is interviewed by Stephen H. Grant on his views on the importance of African culture, and Larry Diamond analyzes the controversies surrounding the recent landslide victory by President Shehu Shagari's National Party of Nigeria.

Analysis

U.S. Strategic Policy in Northeast
Africa and the Indian Ocean **4**
By Larry W. Bowman and Jeffrey A. Lefebvre

Kenya

What Mandate for Moi? **10**
By Rick Wells

Tanzania

Rhetoric Meets Reality **14**
By John Dimsdale

Nigeria

A Tarnished Victory for the NPN? **18**
By Larry Diamond

Culture

A Theater for Development
in Zimbabwe **24**
By Kimani Gecau

African Update

Editor: Michael Maren
Editorial Assistant: Jason Zweig
Researcher: Stephen Adkisson **27**

Interview

Aristides Pereira,
President of Cape Verde **43**
Interviewed by Margaret A. Novicki

Ethiopia

Assessing the Revolution **47**
By Matt Mann

Somalia

America's Ally in the Horn **51**
By Guy Arnold

Seychelles

A Tilt to the West? **56**
By Arthur Gavshon

Culture Interview

Léopold Sédar Senghor,
Former President of Senegal **61**
Interviewed by Stephen H. Grant

Letters to the Editor

65

Photo Credit:

The cover photographs of President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, President Mohamed Siad Barre of Somalia, and President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania were taken by Camerapix.

Léopold Sédar Senghor, Former President of Senegal

INTERVIEWED BY STEPHEN H. GRANT

When he voluntarily stepped down from the Senegalese presidency in 1980, Léopold Sédar Senghor did not retire. He decided to devote the rest of his life to improving the dialogue between cultures. At 77, Senghor cuts an impressive figure. He rises at 6 a.m. and performs a half-hour of physical exercise. He writes from 8 a.m. to noon, and in the afternoons he receives visitors. In his villa in Dakar, he responded to questions put to him by Africa Report correspondent Stephen H. Grant.

AFRICA REPORT: It is said, Mr. President, that you do not miss being in power; you prepare lectures, you write, you travel extensively. One can imagine that relieved of many constraints, you are occupied with projects that you had placed on the back burner during your presidency. Is this an accurate portrait?

SENGHOR: Your portrait is indeed an accurate one. After my studies at the Sorbonne and after receiving my doctorate in grammar in 1935, I succeeded in being appointed to teach in France rather than in Senegal, precisely to avoid getting involved in politics. I was very ambitious, but not to enter the political arena. My greatest ambition from 1935 to 1945 was to become a professor in black African languages and civilization at the Collège de France. In order to do that, I had to obtain a "state doctorate." Consequently, I returned to Senegal in 1945 during my vacation to gather data for my thesis, the subject of which was Sérère folk poetry.

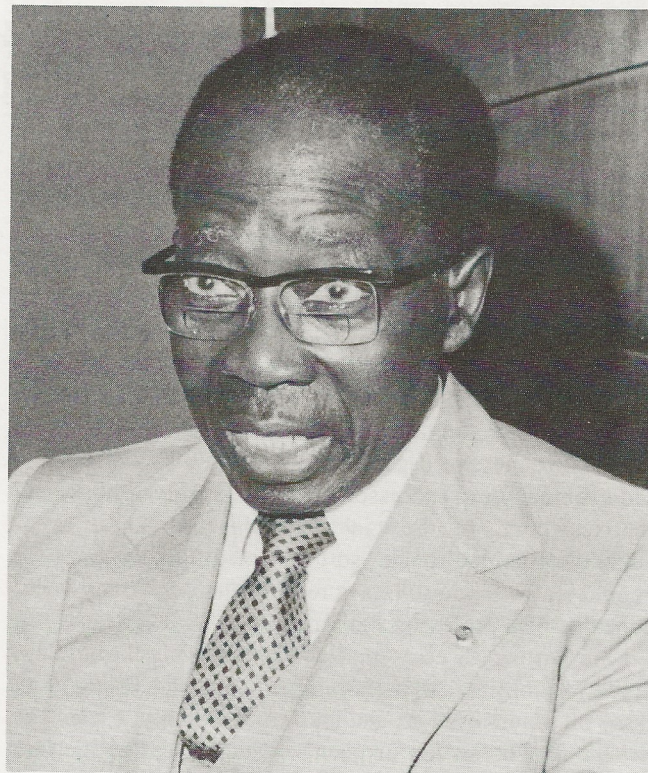


Photo: Papa Diaw

Former President Léopold Senghor: "I have returned happily to my vocation of professor and writer"

My trip happened to coincide with an election campaign for the French constituent assembly, the creation of which had been decreed by General de Gaulle. The Socialist Federation party in Senegal pursued me for a month, insisting that I become its candidate. I finally gave in. In a 1946 interview later published in *Liberté II*, I stated my goal—to obtain for Senegal independence from France without sacrificing friendship. And I was the first one to obtain inde-

A foreign service officer with the United States Agency for International Development, Stephen H. Grant has lived most of the last 20 years in West Africa. He is currently serving with AID in Cairo. The views expressed in this interview do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. State Department.

Senghor
à l'académie française

UN HONNEUR POUR LE PEUPLE NOIR

Nous consacrons aujourd'hui un dossier à Senghor, qui vient d'être élu membre de l'Académie Française. C'est en effet un événement important, non seulement pour l'Afrique mais aussi pour le peuple noir tout entier, consacrant pour la première fois l'admission d'un Nègre sous la coupole, institution créée en 1635 par Louis XIII pour défendre la langue française.



Photo: Papa Diaw

Abidjan newspaper headline: Senghor's election to the French Academy was an "honor bestowed on black Africa"

pendence from de Gaulle. So, in 1960 I was elected the first president of the Republic of Senegal. As early as 1962 I had made a pact with my wife not to become a candidate for reelection in 1965. But in 1962 my prime minister, Mamadou Dia, attempted a coup d'état. It was only in 1970 that I found someone else capable of becoming a prime minister and eventually my successor. In 1978 I resolved not to accept reelection, but Senegal was going through an absolutely devastating drought, so I remained. Finally, in 1980, I could leave. So now, I have returned happily to my vocation, that of a professor and writer.

I am writing an essay that will be entitled "From Negritude to Universal Civilization." Next I plan to write an essay on Maurice Béjart and the Dance. Finally, I intend to write a new collection of poems, which I will entitle *October Poems*.

AFRICA REPORT: You have recently been elected to the French Academy, a high honor by which France has recognized your personal merit. Through it, you as well the African continent and black Francophone literature are honored. What contribution do you hope to make to this institution?

SENGHOR: First, how should one interpret my election? My enemies—for I have some—were the first to carp, spreading the word that this election confirmed that I was more French than black! However, the French press focused more on the negritude aspect than on the Francophone aspect. An article written about me by a poet, by the way, in the major French rightist newspaper, *Le Figaro*, was enti-

tled "The Poet of Negritude." In the major leftist paper, *Le Monde*, the article bore the title "Negritude on Top." Africans reacted to the election in the same way. The telegrams I received from heads of state, in particular from those of Ivory Coast, Morocco, Mali, Comoros, and Zaire, all point out the honor bestowed on black Africa.

What do I intend to do as a member of the French Academy? I am going to work on what I call the "crossbreeding" of the French language. As a result of colonization in each Francophone territory, be it Quebec, Senegal, or Madagascar, we invented new words and new expressions with which to enrich the French language. That is why I hope to introduce into the French Academy's dictionary words like "negritude" and expressions that developed as Senegalisms, Ivorianisms, Canadianisms, etc. A few years ago we published a lexicon of Senegalese French. The words and expressions we invented are more concrete, more vivid, more symbolic. The French language is a language of logic and precision, but also a language with images. I consider English poetry, both British and American, some of the greatest in the world. Compared to French, the language of abstraction, English and German are concrete languages built on and built for their vividness. This is the personality that I hope the French language can adopt, to add to its own genius, so that the result will constitute a cultural symbiosis among Europe, Africa, and Asia.

AFRICA REPORT: You have said that the greatest civilizations are "crossbred." Can you provide concrete examples of what you mean by this term?

SENGHOR: I always say that if you clearly define a problem, you have half solved it. In the 1930s, after my studies at the Sorbonne, I decided to take courses at the Paris Institute of Ethnology and Miss Homburger's courses at the Practical School of Advanced Social Studies, where she held a chair in the Department of Black African Languages. At the Ethnology Institute, the professor who impressed me the most was Paul Rivet, who really founded French anthropology. Rivet was a very cultivated person. He would point to a map of the Mediterranean and say, "It is at this latitude all around the earth where the first and greatest civilizations flourished. Here developed the crossbreeding of whites and blacks from the Straits of Gibraltar to East India and the crossbreeding of black and yellow peoples from Burma to Japan and beyond."

The first civilization and the first writings developed in Egypt and Sumer. And it is reported that Egyptians and Sumerians were more black than white. In the second book of his *History*, Herodotus writes that Egyptians have black skin and tightly coiled hair. Today, reputed biologists such as Jean Bernard and Jacques Ruffié are saying much the same. Neither skin color nor scalp shape, one must understand, is an indication of the degree of crossbreeding. The determining factor is the frequency table of blood groups. Today, Egyptians and Senegalese are only one or two points different in their blood group frequency. And the Senegalese are often considered model blacks: they are tall, with an average height of 1 meter, 76 centimeters [5'-9"], like Americans, and they are very black. As my professor Paul Rivet used to explain, all those civilizations—Egyptian,

Sumerian, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Indian, Aztec, and Mayan—are on the latitude of the Mediterranean and all have crossbred.

In the twentieth century, the United States represents a model of both biological and cultural crossbreeding. The American people are a crossbreeding of Europeans (Teutons, Latins, Slavs, etc.), black Africans, and Amer-Indians. You know what blacks have contributed to American civilization in the fields of dance, poetry, and song. I remember a talent show when I was a student in Paris where everyone performed something from his culture. The American students sang spirituals, which just astounded us. At any rate, together what have North America and Europe (which I call Eur-America) brought to the universal civilization? They have brought a genius for organization and for methodicalness, especially in the fields of science and technology. Not that I agree with the Americans in their political stance or economic policies; for instance, the United States is criticized for having brought about the failure of the last meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development through its intransigence. Nevertheless, I have always said that in culture, the United States is a model, for it accepts its biological and cultural crossbreeding.

Compared to those fertile contributions that Eur-America has brought to be assimilated by the Third World, what do we bring? We bring, among other things, black aesthetics. Interestingly enough, these black aesthetics were introduced by the French into Eur-American civilization in the twentieth century. This introduction took place after what I call “the Revolution of 1889.” This year was marked in France by three literary milestones: Henri Bergson’s essay “Time and Free Will; Paul Claudel’s first play, *Golden Head*; and Arthur Rimbaud’s *Season In Hell*, where he defines a new aesthetic, which was introduced at the School of Paris.

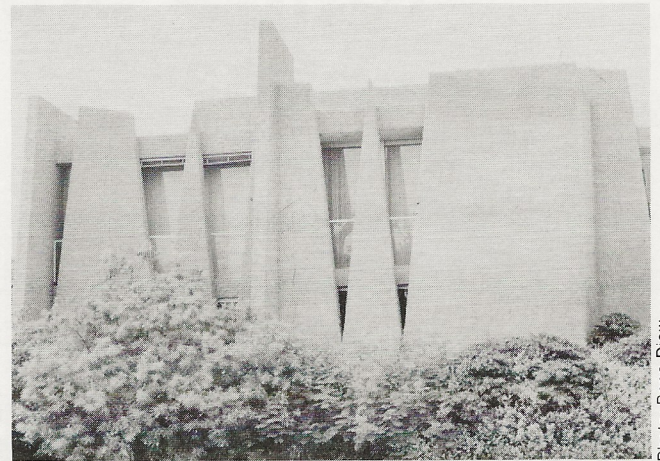
I remember when Pablo Picasso accompanied me to the door and looking me straight in the eyes said, “You should keep on being savages!” The black African aesthetic put its stamp on German expressionism. And if you are interested in the influence of black art on surrealist poetry, I suggest you read the book *The Black Model*, by Jean-Claude Blanchère, a French professor at the University of Dakar.

Or take the Japanese. The reason they constitute a model in a wide variety of endeavors is that they represent a balanced crossbreeding of three cultures. The first inhabitants of Japan were blacks who migrated from Melanesia. They spoke an agglutinative language similar to African languages. Then the white Ainus came from the north; yellow-skinned people arrived only in third place. When I was received into the Rouen Academy, I delivered an address on the “lessons from Japan.” I explained that Japan had taught the whole world lessons, first of all in economy and finance, but also in the cultural field owing to its biological and cultural crossbreeding.

Let me give you some other examples of what I mean by biological and cultural crossbreeding. In the fifth century B.C., the Greeks took the torch of civilization from the hands of the Egyptians. Who were the Greeks who had gone to Egypt to study? My compatriot Cheik Anta Diop tells us

that the philosophers Plato and Pythagoras, the scientist Thales, the mathematician Eudoxus, and the father of history, Herodotus, all studied in Egypt, in an Egypt where the population was black.

Even today, the frequency table of blood groups for Greece, unlike that of any other European country, presents distinct similarities to the frequency table of blood groups



The Senghor residence: “We are creating a new architecture, of which my house is a model”

for Africa, where the major blood group is “O.” In Europe, in general, group “A” is predominant.

If I had the time, I would prove to you that the choral odes and stage dances of ancient Greek theater, which come from the Eleusinian Mysteries, in reality have their origins in the worship of Osiris, which was carried out in Egypt through processions with choral and choreographed accompaniment.

Let’s move on to France. The French are composed, first, of pre-Indo-Europeans. Before the arrival of the Hellenic Europeans, the stock was Negroid (the Grimaldi family in Monaco is an example). The French are made up of Mediterranean Negroids, Celts, and Teutons. The French government today officially recognizes the French culture as being a result of crossbreeding. You will see this statement in the report published in 1963 by the French minister Jeanneney. In this report, French culture is defined as a symbiotic force that has exposed itself to fertile contributions from foreign civilizations in order to form a new culture, the principal characteristic of which is a creative force.

Finally, I come to my own country, Senegal. Since independence in 1960, we have made every effort to create a new literature—using the French language, I admit—a new plastic art, a new dance form, and a new music. In 1980 to 1981, you will recall the success of an exhibition of contemporary Senegalese art that traveled to many major American cities. My election to the French Academy is, in part, recognition of the fact that we are creating a new literature. The Mudra Dance School is helping us develop a new

dance form. The director of the dance school is Maurice Bédart, whose father, Gaston Berger, was a crossbreed of French and Senegalese origin. Bédart is redefining classical ballet by concentrating on its Asian and African influences. We are creating a new architecture, of which my house is a model. This architecture is marked by asymmetric parallelisms. My eldest son, Francis, is helping us to create a

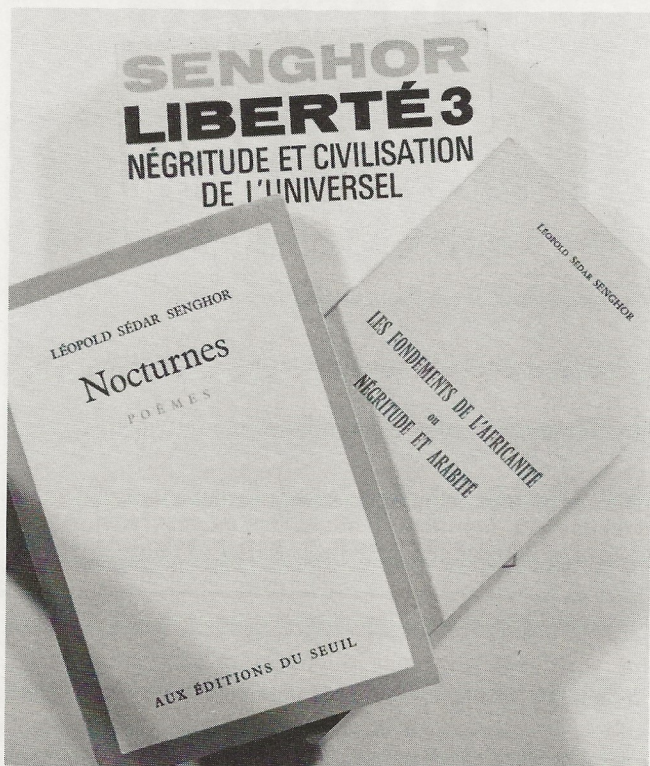


Photo: Papa Diaw

A selection of Léopold Senghor's books: "I have always accorded a higher priority to culture than to politics"

new music. After studying at the Berkeley College of Music in Boston, he returned to Senegal and over a 10-year period composed 20 orchestral works. Those are a few examples of cultural crossbreeding. I wrote an article entitled "A Black African Aesthetic" for the journal *Diogenes*, in which I define the black African aesthetic as a collection of symbolic, melodic, and rhythmic images. When Pierre Soulages, one of the greatest living painters, read my article, he exclaimed, "That definition could apply to aesthetics of the twentieth century in general."

AFRICA REPORT: Adopting biological and cultural crossbreeding as an intellectual theory is one thing, but are there also practical political applications? For instance, do you believe that understanding and appreciating other civilizations can increase the chances for conflict resolution among nations?

SENGHOR: I think so. When I led a mediation team twice to Jerusalem and to Cairo, in responding to a toast by President Anwar Sadat, for whom I had the highest admiration, I noted that the Arab-Israeli conflict was nothing but frat-

ricide. I said, "You, Arabs and Jews, represent the two great branches of the Semitic stem that contributed so much to the world, and in particular the three great monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism." The last time I went to Amman, Jordan, and gave a lecture on negritude and Arabity, I developed the same thesis—the civilizations of the Near East represent an ideal cultural crossbreeding of Indo-European, Semitic, and Arabic civilizations.

AFRICA REPORT: Besides your writings, are there other channels through which you can promote cultural crossbreeding as a means of approaching the "universal civilization?"

SENGHOR: I have always accorded a higher priority to culture than to politics. Currently as president of the Socialist Inter-African, I place emphasis not so much on socialism, or even on social justice, but on democratization. I recently addressed a letter to King Hassan II of Morocco to congratulate him on progress in democratization registered in the last municipal elections. With Prince Hassan of Jordan, I am co-president of the Afro-Arab Cultural Forum of Asilah. Soon we will name representatives from Latin American, Caribbean, and Asian countries to add to the Africans and Arabs in the forum's governing board. My objective is to achieve, in a concrete fashion, cultural crossbreeding between Arab-Berbers and black Africans, and then to extend the crossbreeding to Asia and Latin America. I am also president of the Friends of Miguel Angel Asturias, the Nobel Prize winner. This organization includes Latin American, Caribbean, and African intellectuals. We held a colloquium in Paris in May and next year will hold one in Central Africa.

I presided over a colloquium at the Sorbonne in February. Entitled "Creation and Development," this colloquium was attended by 400 scientists, including Nobel Prize winners, artists, and writers. The colloquium brought out a new definition of culture. I have defined culture as "the spirit of a civilization." President François Mitterrand, however, proposed to colloquium participants a new definition. Viewing culture as a dynamic, not static, phenomenon, he defined it as a "force of creation." I think France is to be honored for being in the avant-garde in the definition of culture as a force of creation and of a new civilization of the universal.

AFRICA REPORT: What influence would you like to exert on the younger generation?

SENGHOR: I would hope that today's youth realize two things—first, the importance of cultural identity. Each person should first of all become deeply rooted in his culture. For us, this means in the values of negritude. Then, to be a whole person, one should expose himself to the fertile aspects of other cultures. For instance, one should be open to the spirituality of the Near East, where three major religions were revealed, but also be open to the organizational abilities and methodicalness that have typified the development of the Eur-Americans. It is not a question for us blacks of simply reliving the negritude of our ancestors. That attitude does not represent progress. What is important, however, is to create a new negritude, a negritude that brings about a symbiosis among European, Near Eastern, and African cultures. That is what I have spent my life trying to achieve.