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# TO CHALLENGE AN EMPIRE

THE "JEUNES SÉNÉGALAIS"  
IN A GLOBAL HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

## ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the 20th century, a group of West African intellectuals formed a political movement in the coastal towns of Senegal, called the "Jeunes Sénégalais". Between 1910 and 1920 the group challenged the French colonial authorities for further political participation and legal equality.

In their struggle, the activists deliberately sought to form personal as well as ideological alliances with political movements all over the world and integrated in a network of global connections of different forms and ranges: The "Jeunes Sénégalais" were inspired by the Young-Turks and other "young"-movements around the globe. In Senegal its members engaged with the ideas of African American and African Caribbean civil rights activists. Within the group's ranks, African activists from Mali to Gabon, French journalists and Caribbean intellectuals worked side by side. The movement became a crossroad where a collision of ideas and actors of different colonial peripheries released new political energies.

The project approaches the Jeunes Sénégalais movement from a global-historical perspective. The focus is on the exchanges and connections of the Jeunes Sénégalais with civil rights activists and political movements in other parts of the world. The project seeks to interrogate the role these global links have played for and within the movement's political struggle, both practically as well as ideologically between 1910 and 1920.

To what extent did the activists fuse the influences from other parts of the world into new social practices and political visions that would challenge an empire?

## Keywords:

Global History, West-African History, Colonial History, Urban History, History of the Atlantic World, 19th and 20th century, World War I

