Several Senegalese historians were active in politics and harassed for that reason.

1961– Cheikh Anta Diop (1923–86), politician, historian, and egyptologist, founder of the Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire in which he developed Africa’s first carbon–14 dating laboratory, was not appointed to a post at Dakar University, apparently for his radical political views. In December 1961 he was also possibly excluded from attending a conference on African history in Dakar. Only after President Léopold Senghor resigned in 1980 was he offered a professorship of ancient history. He was the author of Nations nègres et cultures (Paris 1954), which was initially rejected as a doctoral thesis (said to be the first by a francophone African historian) at the Sorbonne because of its controversial theory about the alleged black origin of ancient Egypt and the consequent cultural unity of Africa and its equally controversial methods of proof. He eventually obtained his doctorate from the Sorbonne with a different double thesis in January 1960. He was the cofounder of three political parties, all declared illegal: the Bloc des Masses Sénégalaises (founded September 1961; banned October 1963; Secretary-General Diop spent a term in prison in 1962 and was forbidden to make radio speeches in 1963); the Front National Sénégalais (founded November 1963; banned October 1964); the Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND; founded February 1976, banned after appeal in January 1978). In 1978 an issue of the Paris-based monthly Afrique-Asie, carrying an interview with him, was banned. As RND’s secretary-general, Diop appeared before the criminal court in December 1980 on charges of illegal political activity but in April 1981 he was acquitted and the ban was lifted after the decision to outlaw the RND was itself considered illegal and without motivation. A legal party since June 1981, RND never made a major breakthrough. Diop’s works were reportedly banned in Cameroon, at least in 1985.

1967 When the sixth Pan-African Congress of Prehistory and Quaternary Studies was held in Dakar, the Senegalese press and some politicians sought to exclude the South African delegates, but Senghor said they were free to attend the Congress.

1976–84 In 1976 the film Ceddo, by novelist and filmmaker Sembène Ousmane (1923–), was banned. Set in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, the epoch of slavery, it concerned the people’s resistance to forcible conversion to Islam. It was shown for the first time in July 1984. An earlier film of his, Emitai (1971), an account of anticolonial resistance by Dyola-speaking villagers in southern Senegal, angered the French but was not cut.

1980 The 12 December issue of Paris-Match was confiscated and banned in Senegal because it carried an article alleging unholy behavior by Amadou Bamba (?1850–1927), founder of the influential Senegalese Muslim confraternity of the Mourides, among whom Bamba was considered a saint.

pre-1988 As a student leader, historian Abdoulaye Bathily (1947–) was imprisoned several times for opposition activities. At one occasion he was put into the army with a group of student leaders. He was also banned, which implied that he could not go to school in Senegal or get a fellowship from the state. He completed a doctoral dissertation in history at Birmingham University. After his return to Senegal, he became secretary-general of the Marxist Ligue Démocratique-Mouvement pour le Parti des Travailleurs (Democratic League-Movement for the Labor Party). In April 1988 he was arrested and convicted of participating in an illegal demonstration (a peaceful demonstration in Dakar against the cost of living and in support of the release of opposition leaders). He was given a one-month suspended sentence. Bathily became minister of urban development and housing (1993–) and minister of energy and water (2000–).

1988 Historian and politician Iba Der Thiam (1937–) was a leader of the teachers’ union when he obtained his licence (master’s degree). He was accused of bombing the French cultural center and imprisoned, but he was allowed to take his exams under police guard. He was eventually cleared and permitted to go to France, where he specialized in political and trade union history. He became history professor and rector at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, and Senegal’s minister of national education (1983–88). He was a member of the International Commission for UNESCO’s History of Humanity. In the February 2000 presidential elections, he was the candidate for the Convention des Démocrates et des Patriotes political party. He obtained 1.2 percent of the votes.

Also see Burkina Faso (1983–92: Ki-Zerbo).
Sources
Index on Censorship, 2/80: 72; 2/81: 77; 4/81: 21, 32–33; 6/84: 47.