

Africa has lost a giant: Professor Samir Amin

On Sunday, 12 August 2018, shortly after 4pm (local) Professor Samir Amin passed away in a hospital in Paris, where he had been flown for emergency treatment at the end of July.

The list of institutions that Samir Amin built and /or led is very long: CODESRIA, ENDA, Third World Forum, the World Forum for Alternatives, the UN Institute for Development Planning (IDEP)... The number of movements, in all continents, that he inspired is much longer. Just two weeks ago in Dakar, he spoke at the launch of the Alternative Report on Africa, the conceptualisation and production of which he actively participated in.

Samir was born in Egypt in 1931. He was a great scholar who taught in several universities of Europe and Africa, authoring more than 60 books and a countless number of journal and newspaper articles in English, French, Arabic and several other languages. Many of his books are classics of development studies and social science literature: *Accumulation on a World Scale; Unequal Development; De-linking; Eurocentrism; The Empire of Chaos; Ending the Crisis of Capitalism or Ending Capitalism? Global History. A View from the South...*

He lived and worked in many places, but made Dakar his base for the last 40 years. This is where CODESRIA, ENDA, Third World Forum, the World Forum for Alternatives and IDEP also have their headquarters. Samir convened and hosted the founding conference at which CODESRIA, as we know it today, was set-up in February 1973. He was then the Director of IDEP, a UNECA affiliate institute based in Dakar. He became the first executive secretary of CODESRIA, a function he held for three years while simultaneously leading IDEP.

To many of us, Samir Amin was at once a friend, a comrade, an elder brother, a mentor, a source of inspiration and the perfect example of the committed intellectual. He was principled and consistent, yet intellectually agile. He was an advisor and a friend to a number of progressive heads of state/government of the South; but was also a highly respected leader in the world social movement. His humility was extraordinary. There were times when I felt that the demands that the progressive world was putting on his time and energy were excessive, given his age. But Samir never said 'no' to a CODESRIA invitation, or failed to make an excellent contribution because he wasn't notified in advance.

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to learn from and work with such a great person, and to have been one of his successors as executive secretary of CODESRIA. Words cannot express the sense of loss that I feel.

On behalf of TrustAfrica, and on my own behalf, I present deep condolences to Isabelle (his life-long partner), Bernard Founou and Lilly Bayoum (his closest collaborator and aide at the Forum), and to all the families that Samir helped to build in so many parts of the world.

May his soul rest in peace!

Ebrima Sall

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