



## Celebrating the life of Samir Amin – A true communist

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Samir was a respected mentor and beloved friend. For almost 20 years, we had worked together in global projects, in particular the World Forum for Alternatives, and the Global University for Sustainability of which Samir was a Founding Member. Samir and I shared

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common friendships with leading  
activist intellectuals from China such

as Dai Jinhua, Wen Tiejun, Wang Hui, Huang Ping, and from Asia – Muto Ichiyo, Mushakoji Kinhide, Surichai Wun'gaeo, Samuel Lee, Vinod Raina, Francisco Nemenzo, Francis Loh, and many others.

In Samir's company, we listened to incisive analysis of the world's

crises and the challenges for the movements, but we would not feel grim. Samir's optimism was contagious. He would always point to possibilities for action and organization. A man of good humour, now and again, he would crack a joke; he would start in a serious tone, as if he were to give a lecture, and then tell the joke with such affection that he would himself be most amused and laughing heartily before his listeners burst with laughter.

Samir is well known in China; over 10 of his books have been published in Chinese. He is known to love China and the Chinese people. Samir joined the French Communist Party at the age of 17, and was greatly motivated by the Chinese revolution one year later, in 1949. He was also passionate about the Vietnamese revolution that defeated France and the USA, two imperialist giants. Yet Samir was not uncritical. He appreciated the sovereign states go towards delinking when they refused to succumb to the hegemonic agenda of the Triad – the USA, Europe, and Japan. In May 2018, in his last trip to China, he warned China against global financialization. He said China should not reproduce relations of exploitation, and compromise itself to integration into capitalist globalization of dispossession through accumulation. He hoped China could provide leadership as in the times of the non-aligned movement, and he pointed out that China had lost popularity with African countries in the last three decades because it was concerned more with trade than with solidarity. However, Samir added that it would be wrong to parallel China with the Triad, not only

because China had been a victim of imperialist aggression and had only recently moved further away from the periphery, but also because China would not deploy military power to impose its agenda.

Irrevocably aligning with the sovereignty and well-being of the peoples of the Global South, Samir proposed the strategy of delinking to guide both sovereign states and the working masses for self-reliance in economic, political and cultural terms. The role of the peasants in defending land, water, and small peasant agriculture is paramount to the delinking strategy. The fight for ecological justice, the defense of the commons for the sustainable livelihood of the people, is thus also an integral part of delinking from savage globalization.

I have profound respect for Samir as a person of integrity and dedication, with a vision and commitment for communism tenderly nurtured in his heart, his thought, and his deeds. Samir was a great theorist and thinker rejecting the path to barbarism, striving for authentic democracy with social progress, for humanity. As importantly, he was an activist organizer, playing a founding role in several prominent global networks such as CODESRIA, Third World Forum, World Forum for Alternatives, and Global University for Sustainability. He had also organized numerous gatherings around the world, including in the World Social Forum. Samir was not dogmatic on the question of political parties. He had faith in the idea of communism and not necessarily in the institution. He felt that one can at the same time be member of several political parties. Why not? Then came his lovely grin.

Two months before leaving us, Samir was still promoting the project of Internationale of Workers and Peoples. On June 27-July 3, Samir sent me (and various friends) about ten emails on his wish to move on with the project. He said, "I am trying my best to push ahead our project for a new Internationale. That will probably be my last important political initiative. A great number of people have expressed sympathy to the idea." In a way, the project was central to Samir's life-long commitment. He had stressed again and again, the movements need to have the lucid understanding that "what unites us is more important than what divides us. The fragmentation must be overcome." In his view, the Internationale is to be a re-grouping of social movements, trade unions, popular organizations, political parties – all that are oppressed by the crises of senile capitalism. An organized structure is needed, but each within the structure would have its independence guaranteed and diversity respected. He said, "The Internationale will give to movements in struggle significant targets and build concrete solidarities. It should start with identifying a first set of common targets for the struggles in the long run as well as for the immediate future." These principles, precious contributions from him, are crystallized on the basis of different practices of diverse groups in the North and South, East and West.

Samir had lived such a full life, devoting himself to struggles for the emancipation of humanity, leaving indelible footprints along paths of struggle, and imparting hope and courage to peoples in resistance. Let us celebrate his life with our serious engagement to continue his legacy!