Tributes: Thinking African – Celebration of two Distingished Scholars

Thandika Mkandawire: The Man, the Scholar, and the Institution-builder

In recognition of the contribution of Thandika Mkandawire to the development of CODESRIA and to the advancement of knowledge production in Africa and around the world (and in celebration of his 75th birthday last October), a colloquium was organized in his honour in his home country, Malawi, 11-13 April 2016. The colloquium, organised by CODESRIA in collaboration with the University of Malawi, and the Archie Mafeje Research Institute at UNISA had as theme: ***Thinking Africa, Epistemological Issues – Celebrating the Life and Work of Thandika Mkandawire****. The event provided an opportunity for friends, colleagues and associates to pay tribute to this great African scholar. Some of the tributes are featured here.*

To Thandika Mkandawire

A Poem by Issa Shivji

Aren't you amazing, Thandika?
You may batter your opponent,
Yet s/he feels flattered.
You may hobnob with the likes of Jeffrey Sachs,
Yet you're unconstrained in stinging critiques of them.
What a fabulous piece that was,
'An intellectual itinerary of Jeffrey Sachs'.

What an amazing person, Thandika?
Humorously saying 'no' to that which he doesn't want,
Yet the proponent feels as if it was a 'yes'.
You can make 'no' feel 'yes', yes, you can,
Yet the 'yes' is always firm, inspiring and fulfilling.
That was the 'yes' to my invite, not long ago,
To be our 5th Nyerere Distinguished Lecturer.

Live long, Thandika.
We need humour,
wit,
solace,
and solidarity,
in our struggles,
And you embody them all.

Prof Thandika Mkandawire delivering a speech at the occasion

Reflection: My year of travels with Thandika Mkandawire

Marianne Camerer

Try keeping up with a 75 year old. There is no rest for the wicked as we travel around the continent and engage, geographically, with the issue of African economic integration. The seven I's as an entry point for discussing regional integration that I'd first heard of two years ago when I met Thandika at the Tralac conference in Cape Town in May 2014 where he gave the keynote address, are now known by heart: Initial conditions; Ideational factors; Individuals who play a very important role in African politics; Institutions (national and societal); Interests; Industrialisation as a measure of development; and the International context. Along the route the model to explain the challenges to integration is populated with more examples, and an 8th, "I", Idiocy, is added.

Our first conversation was about twins: I am a twin and his recently born twin grandchildren living in Pretoria give an inkling of an interest he and Kaarina might have to spend some time in SA. Can we make it happen? With support from the funders we manage to entice them, patient and ever gracious, through onerous visa processes (police clearance certificates for all the places he has ever lived) to come to Cape Town for some months in residence at the GSDPP. And they did. As a visiting professor at UCT and Senior Fellow in Residence with the Building Bridges programme at the Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice.

And the conversations continued, informally and more formally at an experts meeting in Cape Town's Townhouse Hotel in November 2014 on the political economy of African Economic Integration; at a policymakers roundtable in Somerset West in May 2015 on the obstacles to integration; and at three regional workshops in East, West and Southern Africa on the following themes: The role of domestic capital (Dar es Salaam, August 2015) co-hosted with the Uongozi Institute; Pan-Africanism, Culture, History and Ideas (Dakar, September 2015) co-hosted with CODESRIA and the final meeting on Evidence and Accountability (Lusaka, November 2015) co-hosted with UNECA-Southern Africa. Through glorious African sunshine and pouring midnight rain we made it.

Over the period November 2014 – December 2015, GSDPP facilitated five meetings in four countries bringing together over 140 participants from over 20 African countries on various aspects of African Economic Integration. These meetings would not have happened without Thandika's convening force of intellect, humor and extraordinary network, embracing old and young, experienced and novice, to exchange ideas on the intractable issue of how to integrate Africa both economically and politically in a way that engages current citizens' imagination.

Very Jovial, but Firm

Taladidia Thiombiano

I made acquaintance with Thandika over three decades ago, while I was a green researcher at CODESRIA. Very jovial but firm in his principles, he is one of the great Pan-Africanist intellectuals who has contributed so much to the African consciousness through his various research works in social sciences. As an economist by training, he is one of those who realized very early the negative impact of conventional economic thinking on the development of African economies. This is certainly one of the reasons that prompted him to focus his works on issues of epistemology in the social sciences. Indeed, knowledge of the construction of a science is a step in contributing to the renewal of this science. The consistency in his thought lies in the role that African intellectuals should play through their reflections, commitment and struggles for the development of Africa. But he is also aware of the need to have very strong pan-African research structures like CODERIA where he spent much of his life to promote this institution, first as Deputy Executive Secretary, then as Executive Secretary from 1986 to 1996 and now as a senior experienced researcher and mentor.

Essential Mkandawire: Tribute to an Icon!

Said Adejumobi

From a humble begining in Malawi, Thandika Mkandawire rose to become one of the best, if not the best, in African and indeed, global social science scholarship. Thandika represents the possibilities of knowledge, the gains of rigour and perserverance, the endurance of human spirit, and the triumph of excellence, orginiality and creativity.

A pan-African scholar per excellence, I met Thandika about 21 years ago as Executive Secretary of CODESRIA. Since then, both on and off the field of scholarship, Thandika remains a mentor, big brother, friend, comrade and colleague. With infectious simplicity, Thandika breaks generational boundaries, connects with people of different disciplines and persuasions and listens attentively to others and their ideas even if he diasgrees with them vehemently. For him, scholarship is not about noise but ideas. Ideas constitute the very foundation of human progress, which he cherishes with passion and commitment.

Thandika has many parts. He is a remarkable institution builder; a knowledge worker and organic intellectual; a political activist relying on the power of ideas; a mentor to many generations

of African scholars including myself; a committed pan-Africanist; an active social being and now, a caring grand-father. Thandika works very hard but does not shy away from playing hard too; he is an all rounded personality, who makes the best use of life.

Achie Mafeje and Thandika Mkandawire are two African intellectuals who have had profound impact on my scholarship; yet they both differ in their personality and outlook. Mafeje carries the aura of an accomplished scholar, who cannot stomach either intellectual laziness or ignorance. Thandika on the hand other, is a soft and extremely accomodating scholar, who demonstrates temerity in scholarship. Yet, in both lies the best tradition of knowledge and scholarship in Africa.

A major lesson I learnt early enough from Thandika is that knowledge and scholarship are not neutral social values; they are sites of political contestations, social and ideological construction of society and class configuration of interests no matter the claim to objectivity that social research expouses. Whether in terms of the genealogy of Africa's political economy, a deconstruction of Africa's economic crisis, and solutions; anaylsis of the structural adjustment program and the post-adjustment era and the current Africa' s rising story, Thandika demonstrates unusual capacity to think differently, offer counter-arguments and create new narratives. He is an intellectual giant whose ideas, views and perspectives reverberate globally and are highly respected in the knowledge and policy communities.

Thandika has paid his dues; he has played his part and continues to do so. We are proud of him and so is the continent. We pray for good health, happiness and God's guidance for him as we celebrate this exceptional scholar and a rare gift to the continent and the world- God bless Thandika.

Thandika can be Imperfect

Ilcheong Yi

Thandika has a great ability to explain in simple and plain terms what we make, or often even insist on making complicated. He is prepared to answer all the questions raised by us. But I witnessed a rare instance, which may deserve a place in the seven wonders in history: the moment when Thandika was a bit embarrassed by the limitation of his ability.

It was one fine afternoon of May 2011 in Yangpyeong, South Korea. After the workshop on Korean development experience in Seoul (the papers from that workshop were published in a co-edited volume of Thandika and me), before he finished his visit to South Korea, I wanted to show him around some tourist attractions. Thandika asked me to take him to rural areas in South Korea, so we decided to go to Yangpyeong, which is a small county near Seoul. On the way to the fringe of Yangpyeong County, we came across Yangpyeong High school, which was established during the Korean War, and he wanted to go inside and have a look around the school. As we strolled around the school, some kids in the classroom spotted us, or rather him, a foreigner coming out of nowhere. Chuckling to each other, they waved at us, or perhaps at him. I am not sure whether it was his charm, or the desperation of those kids to escape from the hard work of their high school class.

Ebrima Sall, Executive Secretary of CODESRIA at the occasion

Anyway, the teacher invited us to her classroom. In Korea, if you are a foreigner, whether black or white, it is believed that you should be able to speak English. The class was an English class for second year high school students, and the teacher invited him to give a speech, of course in English! Thandika introduced himself, and said he was from Malawi. The word "Malawi" put all the students in unexpected excitement. "We have just discussed about Timbuktu, Africa" they chorused. After all, they were too young to be blamed for confusing Malawi with Mali and having Africanism as orientalism 2.0. Soon, students started raising their hands to ask questions on Timbuktu and Africa. Why is Africa so poor despite its glorious civilization like Timbuktu? What is needed for Africa to develop economically and socially? What do you do for African development? Well, those kids had a perfect person in perfect time. It was indeed a moment of truth for him… After his brief talk, we took some photographs with the students and left the classroom. I told them in Korean, "when you become university students, please find and read his books and articles and you will get all the answers!" I cherish this memory since that was the only moment when he was not prepared to answer questions from an audience as far as I can remember. Thandika can be imperfect!

The Iconic and Progressive Role of Professor Thandika Mkandawire as a Great and Fine African Intellectual Giant

Nanah Busia

It is not an easy exercise giving testimony about the role played by an African intellectual giant of the stature of Professor Thandika Mkandawire; where to start and where to end presents an enormous challenge. I will therefore confine my testimony to my own personal encounter with him.

Like all towering iconic scholars, I had met Thandika through his publications before meeting him in person in 1992 during CODESRIA General Assembly held at Dakar, in Senegal. The theme of the General Assembly was *Crises, Conflicts and Transformations: Responses and Perspectives*. This, it will be recalled, was two or so years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the accompanying Crises and Conflicts which were unfolding in many African states going hand in hand with the liberal democratization processes, as it were. Thandika presented a paper on the topic: *Adjustment, Political Conditionality and Democratization in Africa.* There was a near consensus in the discourse at the time that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was acting as a catalyst in the conflicts. Thandika made excellent submission on the topic. I was fascinated. In his said paper he cautioned against the attribution of the conflicts solely to the problems of the economy as brought by SAP but said something that still echoes in my ears that "the long hidden macro- economic crises have brought to light long hidden micro inefficiencies". I enjoyed his nuanced insights. It was so refreshing for me as a junior scholar just coming from the academia in the West where neo-liberal Africanists social scientists of the likes of Larry Diamond, Lipset, Richard Josephs et al had dominated the debate and also Western legal scholars have also reduced the otherwise complex discussion of democratization and development in Africa to a narrow issue of mere proper constitutional drafting often with the mantra proposal of two term limitation as the panacea to authoritarianism in Africa as it were. I saw the Thandika and other CODESRIA iconic scholars' perspectives as reflecting the African realities as I perceive it myself but did not have the capacity to articulate as they did.

As fate will have it, in 1995, he recruited me as a Visiting Research Scholar at CODESRIA. My task was to work on legal protection of academic freedom in Africa with the current Executive Secretary, Ebrima Sall and legal succession with Momar Coumba Diop. I was also to work as his research assistant. Under Thandika, my specific assignment was to do a review of the then emerging literature on democratization in Africa. It was such a great opportunity sitting at his feet and learning through this assignment. He was very engaging and in spite of his enormous knowledge he was prepared to listen to my "simplistic" views then and was never dismissive. He accords respect and has no iota of intellectual arrogance. I remember he would from time to time walk down stairs to my office to engage me and a lady colleague on the progress of our work. It was a learning curve. His interest in young African scholars did not stop after work. In fact often it was even more seminal after work. I learnt more after hours when he will invite me and others to a drink "*dans les coins*". And his informal chats were even more informative. He told them in stories with great sense of humour and great depth of knowledge and communicated them with style and ease. He made what appeared so difficult to appreciate become obvious with good mastery over language.

What I learnt under him in the short time I worked as his research assistant could form a whole thesis but key among them was that, although of the left, he was fiercely an independent scholar pursuing truth as he saw it, no straitjackets with him. In addition, he took human rights, even the so called liberal rights, seriously, consequently on his conceptualization of developmental state, which up till this day I love, he has never gone with the flow of thinking that authoritarianism is a necessarily evil whereby some human rights may have to be traded off for economic development. On the contrary, he thinks human rights has teleological role in economic development. And his intellectual arguments which he tries to also support with case studies are persuasive. There was the cynical views used to tease him that his obsession with human rights as a scholar was because of how Kamuzu Banda violated his rights. But, I submit, it is more than that. It is a passion and scientific conviction.

There are few scholars I have come across with such instinctive understanding of African political economy and its people than Thandika. Above all, he is such an organic scholar who engages and stays very close to people and the society he studies and writes prolifically about. Many a times we sat in *quartier populair* and he was sincerely comfortable with engaging with all classes of people.

It was exciting to be at work at the office, and I eagerly looked forward to it. I remember whatever remuneration I was getting was meagre but I had mega satisfaction under his mentoring leadership. One stayed on long after closing hours because Thandika created an atmosphere that was enabling and conducive. Mondays is a day no one likes but I remember waiting for Mondays to be at work. And this was no exaggeration. Studying under his feet, however short, was my finest hour.

Never before and after have I enjoyed working for any institution or organization as I did for CODESRIA under the iconic intellectual and progressive leadership of Thandika. I, like many others, love him for what he stands for in the pan-African world: using scholarship to contribute to the development of "Our Continent and Our Future".

Thandika Mkandawire: The Game Changer

Jimi O. Adesina

First encounters can be profound or ordinary. Often the ordinary nature of first encounters can belie what would turn out to be a profound and enduring relationship – one that is enabling and inspiring. My first encounter with Thandika Mkandawire was in 1989 in Kampala. I was among the laureates for the year's edition of the CODESRIA/Rockefeller Foundation *Reflections on Development* Fellowship programme and we were in Kampala for the inception workshop for the fellowship. Thandika, as the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA and David Court, the Rockefeller Foundation's representative in East Africa led the workshop. Among the facilitators at the workshop were Micere Mugo and Mahmood Mamdani. The encounter with Thandika at the workshop was largely uneventful and applying for the fellowship was itself my first encounter with CODESRIA. The encounter has, since then, flourished. As with others like me, Thandika has remained a remarkable inspiration, an immensely seminal thinker, and someone profoundly committed to the cause of Africa and its peoples. It is difficult to remember an interaction with Thandika from which one did not emerge with a distinctly new insight on a topic or an idea, or remarking to oneself: "I never thought of it that way."

There are three main areas in which one feels a sense of gratitude thinking about Thandika. The first relates to institution building and enhancement. The second concerns the multiple seminal contributions that Thandika has made to African and global social science scholarship. The third concerns his constant concern with and facilitation of the careers of others and younger generations of scholars. In each of these areas Thandika can be considered a 'game changer.'

From the establishment of the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies, to his becoming the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA in 1986, and going on to direct the UN Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva from 1998 to 2009, Thandika was, in institutional terms, a game changer. These were always in the context of a wider pool of actors involved in building and enhancing the various institutions, but the strategic vision and leadership of Thandika have always been crucial. Strong intellectual leadership, personal ascetic and prudent approach to managing resources, immense capacity for fund raising, and facilitating the career of countless others; these are the attributes that Thandika brought to every institution he has ever led.

But so are the seminal contributions he made in several thematic areas of the social sciences. Critical was connecting the dots between democracy, development, and social policy. From the idea that democracy has to be cherished for its intrinsic normative values, to iconic ideas such as "choiceless democracies", "disempowered democracies", "maladjustment of African economies", to "transformative social policy", these are only a few of the critical ideas that Thandika has bequeathed to us and the global social science community.

In institution building, in providing critical intellectual leadership, and in his own extensive scholarly contributions and continuing productivity, a critical element for Thandika was always about enhancing the career of younger generations and facilitating the careers of his peers. In this, like countless others, I am a beneficiary of the immense generosity of spirit of Thandika.

In all these, Thandika was always driven by giving voice to Africans and elevating African voices. His was not simply being Africa-focused but facilitating the authentic interlocution for Africa and its peoples.

Mzee, you are indeed a remarkable Mwalimu and an exemplar – a shining light that leads the way.

A Great Mobilizer of African Intellectuals

Ibbo Mandaza

I have known Thandika since 1978, during the days of contagious optimism about the future of Africa. This gave birth to the likes of the Lagos Plan of Action and such academic fora as the African Association of Political Science (AAPS) and CODESRIA itself, in which Thandika Mkandawire was not only one of its founders but the driving force behind the mobilization of African intellectuals across the continent and in the diaspora.

At independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, I had, as one the first batch of African civil servants and intellectuals in the new and emergent state, the honour and priviledge to invite and interact with such prominent intellectuals, activists and musicians as Thandika himself, Walter Rodney, Dani Nabudere, Claude Ake, Okwudiba Nnoli, Abdoulaye Bathily, Yash Tandon, Mohammed Babu, Frank Bafloe, Abdallah Bujra, Ahmeede Darga, Michere Mugo, Patricia McFadden, Peter Anyang', Nyongo, Guy Mhone and Bob Marley. Subsequently, we had CODESRIA

second Thandika Mkandawire to the Ministry I was heading, to assist me in the establishment of the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS), with a collection of such of the country's young and energetic scholars that included Sam Moyo, Lloyd Sachikonye, Elinor Batezat-Sisulu, Brian Raftopolous, Thomas Shopo and Rudo Gaidzanwa.

It was against this background that with the sponsorship of CODESRIA and at the initiative of Thandika, Zimbabwean scholars produced the seminal book, *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transformation, 1980-1986*.

AAPS, CODESRIA and ZIDS led logically into the birth and development of the Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust, established in 1987 as part of the institution-building tradition of which Thandika Mkandawire remains to this day a towering giant in African scholarship.

Therefore, it is most appropriate and poignant that we should be honouring this brother and comrade in the country of his birth, from which he was in exile, 1964 to 1994, for his commitment to the African Struggle, our Struggle.

Outstanding Intellectual Capacity

Abdalla Bujra

Thandika's intellectual capacity is outstanding and well known. But his personality – essentially his incredible sense of humour, his love of arguments and night clubs has maintained our close relationship for almost 15 years. It is difficult to forget Thandika, even if at times you want to.

A group phot of participants at the event

Helmi Sharawy –Accolades for a Distinguished Scholar

On 11 May 2016, a round-table was organised in Cairo, Egypt, to celebrate the life and work of Professor Helmi Sharawy. The round-table which was held on the back of the Gender Symposium organised by CODESRIA and the Arab and African Research Centre (AARC), provided an opportunity to celebrate one of the leading scholars in Africa.

Helmi Sharawy is considered as one of the leaders of our community. He was the founding director of the AARC, and he played a pioneering role in the development of CODESRIA, in the promotion of the study of Africa, and in the formation of a number of institutions and associations, such as the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). He was elected and served two terms as a member of the CODESRIA's Executive Committee.

He is currently the vice president at the Arab and African Research Centre in Cairo, Egypt and its director from 1987-2010. From 1960 to 1975, he was the coordinator for African Liberation Movements office at the African Association under the auspice of the President's Office of African Affairs. Then he became a consultant to the Ministry of Sudan - Egyptian Integration Program (1975-1980). Academically, he taught "African Political Thought" at Juba University, South Sudan (1981-1982).

Helmi Sharawi was selected as the expert for Afro-Arab Cultural Relations at Arab League ALECSO in Tunisia until 1986. Between 1970-2011, he published 13 books in Arabic and four in English. Some of the books are: Angola Revolution (1978), Arabs and Africans Face to Face (1985), Israel in Africa (1986), Culture of Liberation (2002), Africa in Transition for 20-21st Century (2008), and The Sudan: On the Cross Roads (2011).

Below are some of the tributes delivered in his honour at the round-table.

Helmi: More than a Comrade in Struggle

Samir Amin

Dear Helmi,

Personal serious circumstances do not allow me to be physically present at the morning ceremony in your honour. You know that I regret it and that I am here in spirit, with you, and with all the brothers and sisters of CODESRIA here present.

Helmi, you are not just a colleague in research, a comrade in struggle. You are much more than that. You and I were among the very first Egyptians who understood that our national struggle is part and parcel of the struggle for the reconquest of its independence of all the peoples and nations of Africa, that independence which was stolen by the imperialist conquerors. You and I were in agreement that Egypt and Africa are one, since thousands of years and must remain one and united. You and I supported from the first day Bandung (1955) and the first Afro Asian conference of political parties and states out of which came out the Organization of Afro Asian peoples' Solidarity, held in Cairo in 1957.

Since then, you have been deeply involved in the continuous struggles of all African peoples for the reconquest of their independence, supporting the armed liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies, in Zimbabwe, Namibia and apartheid South Africa.

Helmi, you were with the other Egyptian sister Shahida, among the first people who contributed since the early 70's to the concept of CODESRIA as a Centre able to contribute to promoting an independent African thinking, an independent African theory and practices of transformation of their societies and of their social progress, along with all the African vanguard thinkers.

Helmi, we owe you also the success of the Arab and African Centre of Research. It is not by chance that the Centre is Arab and African, unite and not separate the struggles of all the peoples of that immense region of the world. As director of this centre you have created what was needed.

I am personally proud to have been chosen to chair it. But I know that you and nobody else have made it such a success. You are now the Vice chairman, the real chairman. We owe it to you.

I personally loved your recent paper in Al Tahaluf, where you stressed the importance of fighting for the progress of a lucid democratic spirit in the ranks of our party and of our large movement in the ranks of all citizens of Egypt and of Africa.

I promised to write a solid contribution that we owe you. I shall do it.

Let us continue, all of us: you Helmi, you all, Ebrima and CODESRIA, attending brothers and sisters, to struggle successfully for African independent programmes of sovereign, popular and democratic progresses.

Helmi, convey my love to Tawhida.

From me and Isabelle.

Beacon of Afro-Arab Solidarity

Abdalla BujraMuslim

Once again, excellent decision to celebrate Helmi Sharawy who has been a beacon of Afro-Arab solidarity and a strong sup-porter of CODESRIA from its early days. Apart from his own writings, his translation into Arabic of critical articles and publications of CODESRIA and other publications is an out-standing contribution to Pan Africanism and Afro-Arab solidarity.

As early as from 1958 to 1979, Helmi Sharawy coordinated "The office of African Liberation Movements", in the African Society in Egypt. He has been also teaching African Studies in a number of Arab universities. Despite all that I, personally, value most: "Sharawy's efforts to promote Egyptian people's awareness of being Africans".

This is his anti-imperialist battle to forestall the colonially maintained division between North African countries and Africa South of Sahara. This is his struggle towards a liberated, unified and developed Africa.

A Comrade and a Friend

Shahida Elbaz

It is rather difficult to write objectively about a person you deeply know for a very long time on many and different levels. To me and to my late husband "Archie Mafeje", Helmi was a comrade, a close friend, and to me a brother, in the Egyptian sense, which could be demanding by both sides at times.

The first thing I noticed about Helmi Sharawy when I met him was his solid identification with being an African citizen, with all what it takes, in terms of political and intellectual commitments, as well as related practical duties to realize his believes in Africa's liberation and development.

Helmi: Promoter of Knowledge and Defender of Righteous Causes

Nouria Benghabrit

We reiterate our gratitude to our distinguished scholar, promoter of knowledge and defender of righteous causes across the world.

Mohamed Sharawi HELMI has, for decades, promoted solidarity between Egypt and the three continents, between the Arab world and Africa.

His contribution to the operation of CODESRIA since its foundation has been relentless and we hope it lasts longer again.

Kind regards, Helmi!

A Generous Brother

From left: Dr Shahida El Baz, Dr Ghada Waly, Dr Ebrima Sall and Prof Helmi Sharawy

Tributes

A Great Moral and Political Support to Generations of African Scholars

Issa Shivji

Humble to the heart, Helmi Sharawy has been a great moral and political support to generations of African scholars. He is one of those who never attain a celebrity status, yet in the celebration of others they have had their contribution that often goes unsung. In the 50s and 60s, Helmi supported a whole generation of freedom fighters,

in the 70s and 80s, he did 'behind-the-scene' work to found such important pan-African organisations as African Association of Political Science and CODESRIA. Since then he has continued to build bridges between scholars and intellectuals across the Sahara. Be assured Comrade, your work and exemplary integrity have not been in vain. Decent human beings live forever just as great ideas.

Helmi Sharawy, the Search for a Pan-African Praxis

Cláudio Alves Furtado

Generally, honors tend to be posthumously given when the honored has no way to experience them. Fortunately, CODESRIA has broken, with some regularity, this bad habit.

It's more than just to pay this tribute to one of the deans of CODESRIA, Helmi Sharawy! I could share with him the last CODESRIA Executive Committee. It was a deep and enriching experience! Systematically, he would ask me what was going on in Guinea-Bissau, land of Amílcar Cabral whom he met as a young man in Cairo. He was concerned not only with the prevailing instability in that country, but also he wanted to understand how and why Cabral's heirs did not follow his legacy. Sharawy expressed this concern, once again, when we held a meeting of the Executive Committee in Praia, Cape Verde. During the visit we made to Ana Maria Cabral, Cabral's widow, with a lack of discretion - typical of a great researcher - he put the embarrassing questions.

The permanent questioning of the need of CODESRIA to perform more activities in the African Portuguese-speaking countries as well as in the Arabic ones, the search for a greater involvement of young people and the strengthening of Pan-Africanism were always present in his interventions.

Helmi, Helmi, Helmi, definitely a thinker, an intellectual and a Pan-African!

Guru and one of Africa's Foremost Intellectuals

F.E.M.K. Senkoro

It is impossible, and almost outrageously unfair, to write so short an appraisal of the intellectual life of Professor Helmi Sharawy – such a guru and one of Africa's foremost intellectuals. I will, thus, just give snippets of my discussion with this walking encyclopaedia, especially on African culture, and will reserve the finer details for later projects.

I do not even remember when I first met Helmi. It must have been in one of the CODESRIA conferences or symposia. His interest in, and contributions on, my presentations in such conferences, especially on popular culture, always showed to me a social scientist who had managed, in his life, to break the wall between social sciences and the humanities.

In Professor Sharawy, I discovered how it is very important to re-imagine the future of Africa by reflecting on the past. He always narrates, with relish and fondness, his first visit to Tanzania (then Tanganyika) on the occasion of that country's independence in December 1961. But he constantly too, emphasizes the importance of the memories of how Africa underwent and survived the most brutal experience of slavery and colonialism and, currently, capitalism/ imperialism. My discussions with him mostly centre on how Africa's forefathers created a culture that endured the atrocious forces of his- tory and survived to give us African indigenous knowledge that includes popular folk culture. Although Helmi and I differ slightly on our definitions of popular culture (his emphasis being on popular folk culture rather than mine that is open-ended to include even the modernized and digitalized culture), we basically agree on one point: the abysmal achievements from modernization so far, and the fact that to date the majority of African people continue to live in abject poverty, call to question the side-lining of the cultural dimension of development.

My discussions with him, and his contributions to my presentations; and even his active participation in organizing the International Conferences on African Culture that are held in Cairo almost on yearly basis, insist that the inclusion of culture in general and popular culture in particular, in the development equation, is a learning process that can lead to changed outlooks and practices. The deconstruction of long-held prejudices against African indigenous knowledge and culture is a complex route, and admitting these into the mainstream enhances involvement/confidence of its custodians and provides the missing ingredient in the struggle to reduce poverty and self-denigration of the African people.

Among my numerous discussions with Helmi, one point that keeps on coming up is how prescriptions from the West on how the continent could develop have, indeed, deepened the poverty level of the majority of the African people. For the bigger part, 50 years of independent Africa have, to say the least, degenerated Africa into the abyss of poverty, diseases, and ignorance; and there is need to re-examine where the rain started beating us. Such re-examination necessarily calls for a

critical analysis of our situation so as to discover ways of managing in a better and more efficient ways, the political, social and economic milieu of Africa. Our discussions ultimately suggest that among other factors to be considered is the necessity to re-take Africa's indigenous knowledge and popular culture, and as a primary step, the recording and use of African indigenous languages. This is why Helmi's preoccupation with such languages and the cultures embedded in them that has seen him cover Kiswahili and other languages in his writings and publications. This interest and the interest in African culture in general is an excellent example of Professor A Generous BrotherSharawy's continued search for African identity.

A Generous Brother

Maréma Touré Thiam

Having the opportunity to exchange quite often with Helmi, during the various meetings organized by CODESRIA, either as part of the Gender symposiums or during general assemblies or other key events, I learned to appreciate him as a colleague and a senior, so much so, that there are no adequate words to describe him.

Helmi, the generous brother, always eager to make us comfortable in Cairo and ensure, with his lovely wife, that I bring something from his admirable land; Helmi, the activist, the Pan-Africanist, the Humanist or just simply Helmi the combatant always at the frontline for righteous causes. Given his CV trying with difficulty to capture the multidimensional career of a critical intellectual, one can quickly deduce that the golden thread of his life is, undoubtedly, the continuing struggle against enslavement and social injustice.

Helmi Sharawy quickly realized, as Leopold Sedar Senghor proclaimed on 31 October, 1961, addressing the UN General Assembly, that "there is freedom only in the fullness of personality and we should BE to unite." From this awareness, he drew an attitude and meaning for his life, totally dedicated to the solidarity of peoples and to regaining the status of a subject for Africa, African men and African women.

By harmoniously combining Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism, Helmi makes a vital contribution to the cultural unity of our continent. By co-organizing, in a diligent and committed way the gender symposiums, which eventually integrated into what is considered as the charm of Cairo by activists of gender equity and equality, and also through his contributions and interventions, Helmi gives meaning to that other reality which extends Senghor's statement: there is fullness of personality only in equality of all components of the human race and in the transcendence of gender, race and social class barriers."

Prof Sharawy with some of the participants

Tributes

Helmi Sharawi is a living Embodiment of Respect for Others and Respect for All

Aminata Diaw

My first encounter with Helmi Sharawi dates back to 1989, at the General Assembly of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). As a young teacher at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar (UCAD), I discovered for the first time, a community that I made mine later as it perfectly embodied the values that gave meaning to my life and which pertained to the sovereignty and development of the African continent.

With Professor Abdoulaye Bathily and my friend and colleague Mamadou Diouf, I met illustrious figures of the African intelligentsia: Dani Nabudere, Okwudiba Nnoli, Samir Amin, Helmi Sharawy and many others. This encounter was decisive in my life and in my intellectual trajectory: in the 80s when the Bretton Woods institutions thought for us Africans, decided for our states, I was reinforced by the fact that alternative thought existed somewhere in Africa, embodied by men and women who had an unwavering faith in the destiny of this continent.

Among all these figures embodying lives of struggle against and refusal of domination and alienation, one particularly struck me, that of Helmi Sharawi, "my Egyptian father" because it is from that encounter that I had the privilege to be called "my Senegalese daughter" by Helmi. Helmi Sharawi has the gift to make everyone feel comfortable, especially by giving to everybody the extraordinary impression to be a privileged interlocutor. Every moment spent with him is a window to a sequence in the history of this continent for which he has been a witness or an actor.

Through his gentleness and kindness, the features of such exceptional beings endowed with fine intelligence who can forget their greatness to adjust to other people's level, through his ability to listen, Helmi Sharawi is a living embodiment of respect for others, respect for all.

This respect goes hand in hand with a strong, unshakable, not negotiable conviction in something that seems to be the horizon of meaning in his life as evidenced by his concluding words in Political and Social Thought in Africa:" My small family was extended to reach the limits of Africa, North and South, and East and West. We welcomed revolutionaries and freedom fighters, and intellectuals and artists at our home, and shared with them the hard times and the good ones".

This faith in a united and sovereign Africa which masters its destiny makes Helmi a genuine pan-Africanist who may as well be interested in the issue of revolution and even manuscripts in Ajami. Of our several encounters during CODESRIA meetings or gender symposiums, I remember this ever reaffirmed lesson: Africa must be for us a lifetime project!

Thank you for the life lesson and long life to you, my dear Egyptian Daddy!Helmi Continues to Nurture a New Generation of Researchers.

Eager to Nurture Young Scholars

Rawia Tawfik

As a young scholar, I feel indebted to Prof. Helmi Sharawy, not only for the original knowledge he produced which shaped my understanding of the African continent, but also for his eagerness to nurture a new generation of researchers which will continue his mission. Since the beginning of my career as a researcher of African politics, Prof. Sharawy has been one of the few leading scholars in the field who closely followed my work, and frequently challenged me to develop it. The monthly forum he convenes at the centre for Arab and African Studies stands as a model for intergenerational dialogue and stimu-lating exchange of ideas.

A Great Mentor

Abeer Rabei

"You are African; you have to consult African references in your research. Analyzing people–state dynamics is more important than studying the structure of political institutions. Codesria has announced the annual institute, try to apply. I found this book in my library and it is related to your M.A study. The monthly meeting of Africanist group will be next Wednesday, don't forget and tell other colleagues"

These are part of Prof. Helmi's generous advices and support. Prof. Helmi incubates Egyptian young scholars who specialized in African studies and he keeps affording precious ideas and methods to enhance our academic career. Much gratitude and appreciation Prof. Helmi Sharawy.

So Kind, So Considerate

Fatim Ndiaye

Dear Prof. Sharawy, through this tribute, I would like to express my appreciation to you for the friendship and companionship we have had for over 30 years. I could never forget the good words and the gentleness you always showed when I came to pick you up late at the airport "Oh! Fatima it is so late? Why are you not sleeping? The driver can come to pick me! All this to relieve me, and it gave me a lot of courage to face the rest; you have contributed to the success of CODESRIA and I thank you because CODESRIA means everything to me. It is my second family; May Allah bless you. Long life and good health to you professor so that you can continue to give your support to the institution. Amen. Long live CODESRIA! God bless you! Amen.

A True Pan-African

Marie Ndiaye

To a friend,

Writing this tribute, I realize I have known Professor Sharawy for 27 years now. A lifetime!

It is a great honor to have him as a friend, a considerate and caring friend who brought me a gift from Egypt whenever he came to CODESRIA meetings.

Last month in Malawi, I told him how much I would have liked to be in Cairo at the time of tributes, thanks, appreciation and sharing.

Tributes from friends and comrades hailing from all over Africa.

Thanks from all the generations that have benefited from his knowledge and support.

Appreciation from all the men and women who once crossed his path. Sharing of slices of the unique life of a true Pan-African.

Congratulations Professor.

Introduction to Helmi Sharawy's Book *Political and Social Thought in Africa*, (CODESRIA, 2014)

Samir Amin

Helmi Sharawy has directed the Arab and African Research Centre (AARC) in Cairo since its creation in 1987. Under his energetic guidance, the AARC has become in Egypt, the Middle East and Africa, generally a partner that cannot be ignored in any serious cultural or political debate concerning the challenges that confront the peoples of all of these regions.

Despite the stringent administrative tasks imposed by his directorship of the AARC, Helmi has never failed to bring his own personal contributions into such debates. The collection of contributions chosen for this publication in English is clear evidence of the wide range of subjects he has covered. Such contributions entail a critical reading of the relations between the Arab and African worlds in the past and present; the expression of the cultural dimensions of their liberation struggle; the role of civil society in their current struggles; and the perspectives of such struggles open for a possible renaissance".

The Round Table Session