

Special Session C

Christianity, Islam and the Values of the Market Economy

Born in 1934. Sadik Al-Azm graduated with a Bachelor of philosophy from the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 1957. He received his Master in 1959, and his Ph.D. in modern European philosophy in 1961, from Yale University.

Following his studies, he taught philosophy at Yale University in 1961, and lectured at the University of Damascus from 1962 until 1963. He, then, moved to AUB where he acted as assistant professor until 1968. Subsequently, he became editor of the *Arab Studies Review* and a senior researcher at the Palestine Research Centre in Beirut in 1969. As a result of the publication of *Critique of Religious Thought* in 1969, he was arrested by the Lebanese authorities for ten days and subsequently left the country. In 1977, he returned to Syria as professor at the University of Damascus until his retirement in 1999. Sadik Al-Azm taught at Princeton University as a visiting professor from 1988 to 1990 and from 1991 to 1992. Simultaneously, he was a fellow at the *Wissenschaftskolleg* in Berlin and at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington D.C. In 2001, Sadik Al-Azm lectured at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Tohoku, Japan, and in 2004, as visiting professor at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Between 2005 and 2006, he taught at the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and in 2006, at the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). Since 2007, he has been Visiting Professor at the Blaise Pascal Institute at the Free University of Amsterdam.

In 2004, Sadik Al-Azm was awarded the Erasmus Prize, which he shared with the Moroccan author and activist Fatima Mernissi and the Iranian thinker Abdul Karim Soroush in the same year. In 2005, the University of Hamburg awarded him an Honorary Doctorate. During his 40-year career in academia, he wrote extensively on contemporary Arab society, culture and thought. His most renowned and controversial work, in addition to *Religious Thought*, is *Salman Rushdie and the Truth of Literature*, in which he defends the independent views of the secularised Muslim author.

Sadik Al-Azm established himself forcefully in the Arab World as a thinker who is not afraid of expressing courageous views that aim at advancing human progress.



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