On Saturday, 23 April 2005, André Gunder Frank passed away, a victim of the cancer he had struggled against for over a decade. With his death, the social sciences lost one of its most acute and prolific analysts. Hundreds of articles and dozens of books are testimony to this fact.

Frank was an innovative thinker and a much discussed author. His intellectual trajectory was filled with great successes and also some errors, the latter if you take his word for it. Many academic figures have alluded to the power of his ideas which so invariably provoked others to respond. His theoretical production included more than 1000 publications in thirty languages, including 49 books, 169 book chapters or contributions to 145 books, and hundreds of essays and smaller articles that have appeared in academic journals and periodicals. The impressive fertility of his thought, the tremendous diversity of issues he analysed, and his only recent silence, all make it rather difficult to evaluate the whole of his intellectual contributions.

André Gunder Frank was born in Berlin, Germany on 24 February 1929. At the age of four, he and his family were exiled to Switzerland as Hitler rose to power. In 1941, he arrived to the United States where he completed his high school and university studies, remaining in that country until 1961. His academic training culminated in 1957 with a thesis on Soviet agriculture at the University of Chicago. Imagine
Frank in the cradle of the Chicago Boys, that infamous gang of genocidal economists responsible for scorching Latin America and devising recipes of death and misery at the hands of international financial agencies. Frank’s thinking hurdled the ideologues that supervised his academic training and he soon came to the conclusion, as mentioned in his intellectual autobiography, that the determinant factors of economic development are really social in nature. Social change was consequently the key to all social and economic development.

In 1962, Frank travelled to Latin America as an associate professor at the University of Brasilia. Subsequently, he taught at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and between 1967–73, conducted research at the Centre for Socio-economic Studies (CESO) at the University of Chile. His contact with Latin America brought him a high level of personal and intellectual commitment that lasted the rest of his life. He, like his father, had irreversibly opted for the political left.

Frank’s study *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* is a classic work in the critical sociology of Latin America. His conception of the “development of underdevelopment” today has more relevance than ever, since the realities of the continent show it all too clearly. Generations of Latin Americans were influenced by his thought. His contributions to dependency theory were decisive ones. Frank, moreover, was one of the creators of world systems theory, although in our judgement, there is a clear continuity between both theoretical paradigms. Indeed, it is possible to talk of a dependency-world systems perspective for analysing the problems of development and the structures of underdevelopment.

One of his last books, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* was a no-holds barred, frontal assault against Euro-centrism and Occidentalism. This work was read widely, especially in Europe and Asia, uncorking a sharp polemic that yielded diverse critiques of the book, even from Frank himself!1 In dispute were the possible future scenarios of global hegemony, including the position of China. Frank identified China as the former centre of the global economy, temporarily displaced by the Industrial Revolution, and now emerging full circle in recovering its former hegemony. Clearly, all of the ensuing debates were of the type that only history can one day decisively resolve.

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1 See http://www.rrojasdatabank.org/agfrank/reorient.html.