Arthur Seldon died on October 11 2005 at the age of 89. Together with Sir Anthony Fisher and Ralph Harris he was the co-founder of the Institute of Economic Affairs in 1957.

Born to Jewish parents in London’s East End in May 1916, he was orphaned and adopted at the age of three. (His parents were victims of the post-war influenza epidemic). After elementary school he attended Raine’s Foundation School and from there, with the aid of scholarship, he progressed to the LSE where he graduated in 1937 with first class honours.

After a spell in the army he returned to LSE as a part-time teacher and from 1945 to 1949 he combined this with editorial work and some involvement with the Liberal Party. For the next ten years, he worked as an economist in industry and it was toward the end of this period that he became involved with Fisher and Harris in establishing the IEA where he took the post of (at first part-time) editorial director.

It was in this role, which he took on full-time in 1960, that he was able to influence the climate of public and opinion away from the dominant Keynesian consensus and towards the market optimism of Hayek and Friedman, both of whom wrote for the IEA. In addition to his work of commissioning and editing he made a substantial contribution of his own through a steady stream of books and articles. In fact, Seldon wrote the first IEA pamphlet in 1957. Interestingly, in the light of recent events it was titled, *Pensions in a Free Society* and argued for personal private pensions.

The IEA, and therefore inevitably Seldon’s own work, is often seen as laying the intellectual foundations for the Thatcher government that was elected in 1979. And it is true that many IEA publications provided a rationale for the political shift towards market solutions, the combating of inflation at whatever short-term cost and the (brief) preoccupation with the importance of money that characterised Thatcher administrations.

But there were frustrations too, in particular with Sir Keith Joseph’s experiences at the Departments of Trade and Industry and Education, where Seldon was particularly hopeful that his enthusiasm for vouchers might at last bear fruit. Friends (though not Seldon himself) also expressed some dismay when his work was acknowledged by the award of the CBE in 1983, following Harris’s earlier appointment to a peerage.

Although his name will always be associated with the IEA, Arthur Seldon did much of his best work after leaving his full-time appointment in 1981. He continued to write (*Capitalism*, 1990; *The State is Rolling Back*, 1994; *The Dilemma of Democracy*, 1998; and *The Making of the IEA*, 2002) and took on numerous consultancy roles. Looking back, his achievement (and that of the IEA) may be seen in the limited hostility toward Thatcherite reforms shown by the incoming and Labour governments from 1997-on. The presumption that markets provide the best solution, except in a few well-defined circumstances, is an established part of the political (and economic) consensus.

He leaves a wife, Marjorie Willett (whom he married in 1948) and three sons.