

# A Terrible Loss for DIE LINKE and the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation: Axel Troost Obituary

Photo: Axel Troost. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

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By [Jürgen Klute](#)

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The left-wing economist and politician Axel Troost passed away on 6 January 2023 following a short but severe illness.

DIE LINKE has lost its most high-profile economist, who was widely recognised both within and beyond the political party, but also a politician who believed in and pursued alliances with other political actors on the left.

Troost was born on 1 September 1954 in Hagen, a manufacturing town on the south-eastern edge of Germany's Ruhr region. After completing his Abitur at Schule Schloss Salem, he went on to study economics at Philipps-Universität Marburg, where he completed a PhD on government debt in 1982.

His career began in 1981 when he became head of the Arbeitsgruppe Alternative Wirtschaftspolitik (Alternative Economic Policy Working Group), a position he held until the end of his life. Troost played a key role in compiling the group's alternative report on the state of the economy, which was published every year on 1 May. He also contributed his expertise to the EuroMemo report, which the group began publishing in 1997. Troost had also been managing partner of the Progress-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (Progress Institute for Economic Research or PIW GmbH) in Bremen and Teltow since 1984, as well as serving as head of the Büro für Strukturforschung Rostock gGmbH, a non-profit conducting structural research in Rostock, between 1990 and 2001.

During the labour market reforms undertaken by the SPD–Green coalition government led by former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (widely known as the 'Hartz' reforms), Troost increasingly became politically active. In 2004, he was one of the key actors behind the creation of Wahlalternative Arbeit und soziale Gerechtigkeit (WASG), a left-wing political party that shared similar political objectives to, and thus formed an electoral pact with, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) during the 2005 Bundestag election. Troost stood for WASG on a joint electoral list with PDS candidates and was elected to the German Bundestag in 2005, where he served almost uninterrupted until 2021.

Troost was also a member of the WASG's national executive committee and one of the architects of the party's 2007 union with the PDS to form DIE LINKE. Troost was a member of DIE LINKE's executive committee until the party's 2022 conference and served as vice chair for a number of years.

As an economist, Troost helped shape DIE LINKE's budgetary and fiscal policies. In addition to contributing to financial policy, Troost was also actively involved in forging links across Europe, in particular fostering close ties to Syriza after it rose to power in 2015, pushing for solidarity and cooperation with Die Linke's Greek sister party as a member of the German Bundestag. He also encouraged his German colleagues on the left to show understanding for the political pressure being exerted on Alexis Tsipras' left-wing government – especially by Germany – forcing Greece to make certain compromises.

More recently, Troost had also been more heavily involved with the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation, where he brought his expertise to bear as a senior fellow in economic and European policy at the Foundation's Institute for Critical Social Analysis.

Although his primary focus was economics, Troost always showed a keen interest in other fields. For instance, as vice chair of Die Linke during Germany's 2016 Katholikentag, a biennial meeting of Catholics, Troost met with Christine Hoffmann, general secretary of Pax Christi Germany, Professor Franz Segbers, a theologian and social scientist, and Chilean missionary Sister Karoline Mayer to discuss the brutal impacts of poverty and social marginalisation, the idolisation of economic growth as well as the terror inflicted by war and banks.

Axel Troost stood for sincerity, objectivity with a healthy dose of humour, reliability and sound academic research as well as a politics focused on forging links and cooperation. In particular, he was committed to fostering ties with left-wing economists and trade unions. He was an organic intellectual but would never have referred to

himself as such. A man with a wonderful sense of humour whose laughter will be among the many things that we shall miss.

We offer our condolences to Axel Troost's wife, his two children and his many friends.

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