

Leading GDR Writers Protest the Expatriation of Wolf Biermann (November 17, 1976)

Abstract

When the GDR government expatriated Wolf Biermann, a popular songwriter and regime critic, a dozen prominent writers dared to protest the high-handed action. They asked that the measure be reconsidered, thereby signaling their desire for greater freedom for internal debate within East Germany.

Source

Declaration of Protest against the Expatriation of Wolf Biermann

Wolf Biermann was and is an uncomfortable poet—he shares this quality with many poets of the past. Bearing in mind Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, according to which the proletarian revolution is constantly self-critical, our socialist state should, in contrast to anachronistic social forms, be able to tolerate such discomfort in a calm, contemplative way. We do not identify with Wolf Biermann's every word and action, and we distance ourselves from attempts to misuse the events surrounding Biermann against the GDR. But despite all his criticisms, Biermann has never left any doubt, not even in Cologne, about which German state he stands for. We protest his expatriation and ask that the measures taken be reconsidered.

Sarah Kirsch, Christa Wolf, Erich Arendt, Jurek Becker, Volker Braun, Franz Fühmann, Stephan Hermlin, Stefan Heym, Günter Kunert, Heiner Müller, Rolf Schneider, Gerhard Wolf.

Source: "Gegen die Ausbürgerung von Wolf Biermann" (November 17, 1976); reprinted in Klaus Wagenbach, *Vaterland. Muttersprache. Deutsche Schriftsteller und ihr Staat seit 1945. Offene Briefe, Reden, Aufsätze, Gedichte, Manifeste, Polemiken*. Berlin, 2004, p. 303.

Translation: Allison Brown

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