The Cadre Issue (May 31, 1983)

Abstract

The problem of recruiting women for top positions in various arenas—whether politics, business, or society—remained unsolved until the end of the GDR. The following text, which pertains to the executive board elections of the East German Writers' Union, illustrates both the struggles and the difficulties associated with electing women to top positions.

Source

Letter from the Berlin Delegation of the Writers' Union

We have noted with interest the names of the people proposed for the future presidium, but we are dismayed to see that while literature written by women is granted equal importance in GDR society, this is not the case when it comes to the very important cadre question.

We accept all the proposed colleagues, but we would like to see the committee expanded to include at least three equally distinguished women writers.

The following colleagues, who, to the best of our knowledge, have not yet been approached in this regard, are among those we feel are suitable:

Brigitte Birnbaum
Dr. Renate Drenkow
Gisela Karau
Wera Küchenmeister
Waltraut Lewin
Rosemarie Schuder[1]
Gisela Steineckert

We think that in such a politically important question it must be possible to change the decision at short notice.

[*The names of the 13 signatories follow*]

The concern is justified; as far as I know, no woman has been found from among those listed. I agree with the rest.

Eva Lippold

I find the presence of women in the highest body of our association to be essential.

Jo Schulz

Assessment: Asked to sign, I think, whether three or also others [should be added], I cannot say.
But without any women at all it seems to me that the presidium would not reflect the eminence of the association and its purpose.
Günther Rücker

No one has spoken to Gisela Steineckert—surprising to shocking!

Monika Ehrhardt

The quality of literature that women here write makes their presence in the presidium absolutely essential.
Walter Kaufmann

The names are not that important at the moment, but the problem is.
Anneliese Löffler

NOTES

[1] Rosemarie Schuder was the only woman to be elected to the presidium at the Writers' Congress—eds.

Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin, SAPMO, DY 30/vorl. SED 32707; reprinted in Henrik Eberle and Denise Wesenberg, eds., *Einverstanden, E.H.: Parteiinterne Hausmitteilungen, Briefe, Akten und Intrigen aus der Honecker-Zeit*. Berlin, 1999, pp. 187–89.

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