



Volume 9. Two Germanies, 1961-1989
The Cadre Issue (May 31, 1983)

Up until the end of the GDR, problems regarding the recruitment of women for top positions in politics, the economy, and society remained unsolved. The following text, which pertains to the executive board elections of the East German Authors' Association, illustrates the efforts and difficulties associated with electing women to top positions.

Letter from the Berlin Delegation of the Writers' Union

With great interest, we have taken note of the names of the people suggested for the future presidium but are dismayed to see that while literature written by women is granted equal importance in GDR society, this is not the case in the very important matter of the cadre. We accept all of the suggested colleagues but 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 spoken to in this regard, are among those we feel are suitable:

Brigitte Birnbaum
Dr. Renate Drenkow
Gisela Karau
Wera Küchenmeister
Waltraut Lewin
Rosemarie Schuder?
Gisela Steineckert

We believe that, when a matter of such political significance is concerned, it must be possible to change the resolution on 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 committee 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

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* [*Agreed, E.H.: Internal Party Memos, Letters, Files, and Conspiracies from the Honecker Era*]. Berlin, 1999, pp. 187-89.

Translation: Allison Brown