

Horst Wessel Song (1929)

Abstract

Horst Wessel was the commander of the SA militia in Berlin's neighbourhood of Friedrichshain during the late 1920s. He composed the lyrics to this song in 1929, putting them to an old folk melody that was widely familiar in Germany. In 1930, two communists mortally wounded Wessel during a dispute over his eviction from his apartment. While he was dying, Goebbels visited him in the hospital, already strategizing how to turn him into a martyr, and upon Wessel's death the Nazis worked immediately to lend him mythological status, with a dramatic funeral during which Goebbels spoke of him as a "Christ-like" figure. After the Nazis came to power, the "Horst Wessel song" became the national anthem to be played along with the first stanza of the Deutschlandlied ("Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles"—Germany, Germany above all else). The song was banned in East and West Germany after 1945.

Source

Raise the flag! The ranks tightly closed!
The SA marches with calm, steady step.
Comrades shot by the Red Front and reactionaries
March in spirit within our ranks.

Clear the streets for the brown battalions,
Clear the streets for the storm division man!
Millions are looking upon the hooked-cross full of hope,
The day of freedom and of bread dawns!

For the last time, the call to arms is sounded!
For the fight, we all stand prepared!
Already Hitler's banners fly over all streets.
The time of bondage will last but a little while now!

Source: Sound recording, n.d. Internet Archive
<https://archive.org/details/horstwessellieddiefahnehoch>

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