

Music as Resistance in the Camps: “Fest steht” (1942)

Abstract

Erich Frost (1900-1987), a Jehovah’s Witness from Leipzig, composed this song, “Fest steht (Forward, You Witnesses)” while imprisoned at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1942 for smuggling anti-Nazi pamphlets into Germany. He was later transferred to a labor camp in the Channel Islands but survived the war and returned to Germany. “Fest steht” remains a central hymn among Jehova’s Witnesses, as it documents their persecution and resistance during the Nazi era.

Source

Firm and resolute in this evil time,
To fight for truth God's people stand ready.
Before Satan's hateful multitudes
As Christians they show courage.

Chorus

So forward, you Witnesses, be strong of heart now,
And rejoice in the work of Jehovah always.
Proclaim the message, old and young.
Soon the new order will deliver mercy.

Truth and justice men have done away with.
The name of Jehovah slanderers attack.
They are put in their place
By Christians who truly love God.

Fighters of Jehovah are not liked today,
indeed, neither agreeable to the world nor to the rulers;
Yet here they stand, firm in faith.
Nothing can rob them of their integrity.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of Johannes Wrobel
RG-91.0098

Recommended Citation: Music as Resistance in the Camps: “Fest steht” (1942), published in:
German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/ghdi:audio-5006>> [May 07, 2024].