

Wendish/Sorbian Nationalism - Their Anthem and Flag

The Sorbian poet Handrij Zejler (1804-1872) first published lyrics for the Sorb anthem in 1827. In translation it is known as “Beautiful Lusatia”. In 1845 the renowned Sorbian composer Korla Awgust Kocor (1822-1904) set the lyrics to music and the first performance was held in Bautzen on October 17th 1845.

Beautiful Lusatia

<i>Lusatia, beautiful,</i>	<i>May thy future be</i>
<i>Gracious, dutiful,</i>	<i>Blooming joyously!</i>
<i>Land of Sorbian forebears' toil.</i>	<i>Oh, may from thy womb appear</i>
<i>Land of dreams, resplendent soil,</i>	<i>People that the world holds dear.</i>
<i>Sacred are to me thy pastures.</i>	<i>Worthy of eternal memory! (1)</i>

A flag of the Sorbs was first mentioned in the second half of the 19th century.

As German pressure increased at the beginning of the 20th century, the Sorbs tried to gain rights of autonomy within the German Empire. The political organization Domowina was established in Bautzen in 1912. After the end of World War I, during which many Sorbs had served and died in great numbers, attempts were made to put in place a separate Sorb state, and representation was made to the negotiations at Versailles. However, an independent republic was not favoured by the Allied nations who were afraid that tensions could destabilise the whole region.

With the rise of Hitler, minority institutions were closed down and in 1935 publications in Sorb were banned. Sorb books were seized and burnt. Many intellectuals and public figures were arrested and some sent to concentration camps. During World War II (WW2) there were plans to transplant the entire community, but the Germans were defeated at Stalingrad before these plans could be implemented. (2)

After WW2 the German Democratic Republic (DDR) passed laws to protect the rights of the Sorbs, and the Domowina, closed from 1939, was reopened in 1945.

Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, modern laws defining the status of the Sorb flag and anthem were passed. The following excerpt is from the ‘Law for the Rights of the Sorbs in the Free State of Saxony’, passed in 1999:

4. Sorb colours and anthem.

- 1) The colours and coat of arms of the Sorbs can be used in the Sorb area of settlement alongside with the state colours and coat of arms, with equal rights. The Sorb colours are blue-red-white.*
- 2) The Sorb anthem can be used with equal rights in the Sorb area of settlement. (3)*

The Sorb flag has 3 horizontal sections: blue at the top, red in the middle and white at the bottom.

References:

1. [www.Rjana.Luzica – Beautiful Lusatia You Tube](http://www.Rjana.Luzica-BeautifulLusatia.YouTube)
2. www.faqs.org/minorities/Eastern-Europe/Sorbs-of-East-Germany.html
3. www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/de-sn.html

