

## Otto Wels, SPD Chairman and Reichstag Deputy (1924)

### Abstract

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Otto Wels had served as chairman of the Social Democratic Party since 1919 and had represented the party in the Reichstag since 1920. He went down in history, however, for the speech he delivered in the Reichstag on March 23, 1933, the day the “Enabling Act” was approved. To the boos and jeers of Nazi Reichstag deputies and SA stormtroopers, Wels spoke out forcefully against the “Enabling Act,” recalling the democratic ideals of the Weimar Republic and reminding his audience of its social and political achievements. The expropriation of the SPD on May 10, 1933, spelled the effective end of the party in Germany. On June 21, 1933, it was officially banned under the “Reichstag Fire Decree.” Wels went abroad, where he helped put together Sopade, the SPD’s organization in exile. He died in Paris in 1939. Photo by Willy Römer.

### Source

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