

SPD Politician Herbert Wehner (October 1954)

Abstract

Dresden native Herbert Wehner was only twenty-four years old when he became a Communist delegate in the Saxon state parliament [*Landtag*] in 1930. After 1933, Wehner first coordinated the KPD's illegal efforts against the Nazis, but then escaped to Moscow, where he worked with Walter Ulbricht and Wilhelm Pieck, and also became involved in the Stalinist purges. Wehner eventually broke with the Communists during the war. On October 8, 1946, he joined the SPD in Hamburg, where voters gave him a direct mandate in the first Bundestag elections on August 14, 1949. In the first session of the Bundestag, Wehner became chairman of the Bundestag committee on all-German and Berlin affairs, and in 1958 he became his party's deputy federal chairman. Within the party, Wehner worked energetically on behalf of reform and the Godesberg Program. By delivering a groundbreaking eighty-minute speech in the Bundestag on June 30, 1960, he aligned himself – and the SPD – with Western integration and expressed his readiness to join the Union in a common foreign policy and in constructive collaboration as part of "the democratic whole."

Source



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Recommended Citation: SPD Politician Herbert Wehner (October 1954), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:i>

[mage-2547](#)> [May 10, 2024].