

## Erich Honecker and Walter Ulbricht (1968)

### Abstract

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After playing a key role in eliminating Walter Ulbricht's internal party critics Karl Schirdewan, Ernst Wollweber and Fred Oelßner, Erich Honecker (left), then chairman of the Free German Youth, became a full member of the Politburo. As head of the Central Committee's department for "Leading Organs and Mass Organizations" and as Central Committee Secretary for "Safety and Cadre Affairs," Honecker rose to the rank of "second man" behind Ulbricht. As secretary of the National Defense Council, Honecker was head of the main task force for coordinating the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Starting in the mid-1960s, he began distancing himself from Ulbricht's reform attempts and then worked to unseat him. Honecker's attempts came at a time when the GDR was facing economic difficulties and Ulbricht was pursuing a solo path in German-German relations. Photo by Gerhard Kiesling.

### Source

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Source: Walter Ulbricht (right) in conversation with Erich Honecker. Photo: Gerhard Kiesling. Date: 1968. bpk-Bildagentur, image number 00026047. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at [requests@artres.com](mailto:requests@artres.com) (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at [kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de](mailto:kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de) (for all other countries).

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