

## The Church from Below (1987)

### Abstract

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Beginning in 1982, East Berlin's Church of the Redeemer organized annual peace workshops, each of which drew several thousand participants. After the 1986 peace workshop, where human rights issues and the nuclear accident in Chernobyl were discussed, church leaders succumbed to state pressure and cancelled the peace workshop planned for 1987. In response, numerous opposition groups decided to organize an alternative to the official Church Congress scheduled for June 24–26, 1987. In the end, their program, "The Church Congress from Below" [*Kirchentag von unten*], attracted more than 6,000 participants. On June 26, 1987, several hundred participants in the alternative congress created a scandal when they brought their own banners to the closing ceremony of the official congress. (The banner featured in this photograph reads: "Miracles happen again and again. The Church from Below.") The "Church from Below" was founded on September 11–12, 1987, in East Berlin's Sophienkirche. A grass-roots democratic movement devoted to church reform, the "Church from Below" encouraged youth and young adults to "work openly" to achieve their goals.

### Source

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Source: Photograph: Siegbert Schefke. Archive of the Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft. Image no.: RHG\_Fo\_HAB\_16463

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