

International Conference

RELIGION AND WAR IN UKRAINE

The Political,
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Session: Transnational Dynamics of the Religious
Landscape, Part I

9:30AM MST, March 16, 2024

The view from home and abroad: Jewish responses to Russia's war in Ukraine

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This paper analyses how Russia's war in Ukraine has affected Ukrainian Jewish communities, the larger Russian-speaking Jewish population and the wider Jewish world. Religious communities have been paramount in creating communities of care in war torn Ukraine, but the current academic conversations on the topic have largely left out the role of minority ethno-religious groups and, specifically, Jewish responses in and outside of Ukraine. This paper asks how Jewish people, communities and organisations have shaped and have been shaped by the ongoing trauma of war. Drawing on ongoing ethnographic fieldwork since March 2022, I argue that while the war has united the Jews of Ukraine with one another and the wider Ukrainian society, it has also divided the Russian-speaking Jewish population and changed the nature of support of transnational Jewish organisations whose initiatives to help ex-Soviet Jewry have been caught up in the politics of war.

Marina Sapritsky-Nahum is a social anthropologist and a visiting fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University College London (UCL) and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her area of expertise is Jewish life in contemporary Ukraine. She is the author of a forthcoming book, *Jewish Odesa: Negotiating Identities and Traditions in Contemporary Ukraine* (2024, Indiana University Press). She has published articles and chapters on the themes of home and diaspora, cosmopolitanism, religious adherence, philanthropy, and heritage travel. Her current research looks at the experiences of Ukrainian Jewish refugees in Europe and is part of the German Research Foundation (DFG) priority program "Jewish Cultural Heritage."