



IARCEES

Irish Association for Russian, Central and East European Studies

An Cumann Éireannach um Staidéar ar an Rúis agus ar Thíortha na hEorpa Láir agus Thoir

**Conversions in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe since 1800:
Religious, National, Ideological and Sexual**

University of Galway, 16-17 June 2026



Viktor Vasnetsov. Baptism of Prince Vladimir. Fragment of the painting of the Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev, between 1885 and 1893
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All sessions will be held in AS203, also known as the River Room on the Arts/Science Concourse. Follow corridor beside Bank of Ireland at end of concourse.

Mon., 15 June

17:00-18:00 IARCEES AGM – Members are encouraged, but not obliged, to attend.

Conference Day One: Tues., 16 June

9:00 Welcome

9:10 – 11:00 Panel 1: Conversion Narratives in Nineteenth-Century Russia

Conversion as Narrative Form in Alexander Herzen's Writings

Mariia Petrovskikh (University of Oxford)

"My God, You See My Heart." Egodocuments by Early 19th-Century Russian Aristocratic Women Reflecting Their Conversion to Catholicism

Urszula Cierniak (Jan Dlugosz University, Czestochowa)

The spiritual life of a convert: the case of Alexandrine von Dietrichstein, née Schouvaloff (1775–1847)

Alicja Bańczyk (Jagellonian University, Cracow)

Religious Conversion and Spiritual Authenticity in Nikolai Leskov's Journalism and Fiction

Marta Łukaszewicz (University of Warsaw)

11:00-11:30 Coffee

11:30-13:00 Panel 2: To Convert or Not To Convert? Negotiating Religious Prejudice in the Russian and Ottoman Empires

Religious Boundaries of Imperial Service in Bessarabia, Southern Ukraine, and the South Caucasus (Late 18th – Mid-19th Century)

Oleksandr Kravchuk (University of Bristol)

Muslim Stepbrothers: Conversion, Law and Violence in the late Ottoman Empire

Nazife Kosukoglu (University of Galway)

Negotiating Conversion: Jews on the Confessional Market of the Russian Empire

Victoria Gerasimova (University of Warsaw)

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Panel 3: Catholics in the Polish/Ukrainian/Moldovan Borderlands in the Nineteenth Century

Re-Consecrated Towns: Architectural and Discursive Conversions in the Podolia Governorate after 1831

Olga Kozubska (Münster University)

Forced Orthodoxisation: A Case of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Clergy in the Soviet Union

Kateryna Budz (University of Edinburgh)

Sanitizing the Imperial Past: The Religious Policy of the Russian Empire and the Architecture of Avoidance in Belarusian School History Textbooks

Nikolai Shpil'kov (University of Siena)

15:30-16:00 Coffee

16:00-17:30 Panel 4: Ideological Conversion and Religious Repression within the early Soviet Union

Isadora Duncan's soft power conversions of Russia to modernism in dance and life

Anna Mackey (Trinity College Dublin)

Kyiv UAOC Pastoral courses in 1920s: shaping Ukrainian Orthodoxy despite Soviet repressions

Olesia Zhytkova (Dublin City University)

Soviet Police and Religious Conversion: Regulating Itinerant Preaching in 1920s Ukraine

Dumitru Lisnic (George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology of Târgu Mureş)

18:00-19:00 Keynote 1: Resilient Religioscapes: Coerced Conversion and the Transformation of Space in Communist and Post-communist Eastern Europe

James Kapaló (University College Cork)

19:30 Pizza Dinner in Sult Bar, Áras na Mac Léinn, on University Campus

Conference Day Two: Wed., 17 June

9:30-11:30 Panel 5: Conversions and the New Political Order in Central Europe, 1918-1945

Anti-conversion narratives and the preservation of the Pole-Catholic identity by the nationalist press: *Wieniec-Pszczółka* weekly 1922-1926.

Maciej Cupryś (Independent Scholar)

Scientist's Change of Citizenship in the Interwar Period: The Case of Professor Marian Szykowski

Roman Madecki (Masaryk University, Brno) and Aleksander Baron (Charles University, Prague)

National and Religious Transformations in the Czech Lands during the Period of the First Czechoslovak Republic

Roman Baron (Czech Academy of Sciences) and Józef Szymeczek (University of Ostrava)

Baptism under Racial Law: Jewish Conversions in the Slovak State, 1939–1945

Martin Pekár (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, Košice)

11:30-12:00 Coffee

12:00-13:00 Keynote 2: Changing Attitudes to Gender Transition: The Case of Poland

Anna M. Kłonkowska (University of Gdańsk)

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Panel 6: National Conversion: The Case of Polish Writers

Naturalisation as Conversion through Exorcism? Maria Kuncewicz's American Chapter
Ola Sidorkiewicz (Université libre de Bruxelles)

Converted to language: betrayal, loss and neurodiversity as witnessing in Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki's poetry

Dorota Kołodziejczyk (University of Wrocław)

Illness as emigration. Language and translation in Izabela Morska's diary, *Znikanie* (2019)

Aneta Stępien (Maynooth University)

15:30-16:00 Coffee

16:00-17:30 Panel 7: Conversion and Resistance from Below

Political Jokes and the Stalinisation of Hungary (1945-1956): Changing Loyalties
Lili Zách (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

Extreme Metal and Cultural Conversion in Finland, Estonia and Ukraine
Polina Holitsyna (University of Tartu)

Language Shift as a Marker of National and Cultural Reorientation: The Case of Ukraine
Conor Daly (Trinity College Dublin)

19:30 Conference Dinner at McNeill's Restaurant, Hardiman Hotel

This conference is held in conjunction with the Centre for the Study of Religion and the Centre for the Investigation of Transnational Encounters and supported by the School of History and Philosophy at the University of Galway.



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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY