

Contested Minorities in the 'New Europe': National Identity from the Baltics to the Balkans, 1918-1939

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Among the many challenges facing the new, or enlarged, nation-states that arose on the territories of the former empires of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in 1918, few were as vexing or complex as the minorities' question. Across this mosaic of geopolitical boundaries, what the Czech philosopher Tomáš Masaryk emphatically termed 'New Europe', thousands of disparate communities suddenly discovered that they now existed as minorities, often in areas adjacent to their designated homelands. Historical scholarship typically characterises this as coming to fuel authoritarian repression and nationalist animosity. This conference presents an alternative perspective to these notions of inherent antagonism by exploring how interwar minorities strove to develop or preserve their respective sense of national or cultural identity through non-violent means. It also wishes to consider how the interwar period shaped and influenced the idea of minority rights as a legal and ideological concept among international bodies, such as the League of Nations, as well as its historical legacy.

The organisers invite paper proposals examining minority groups in the successor states of the former Habsburg, Ottoman and the western areas of the Russian Empires between the world wars. Local case-studies and papers exploring the subject of interwar minorities from a 'bottom-up' perspective are particularly encouraged. Key themes to consider include:

- local and community politics, especially before 1938
- the role of state, cultural or religious institutions in the development of minority identities and processes of engagement
- the formation, or evolution, of international networks including diasporas and cross-border connections
- education, sport and mass culture as vehicles of consolidating or expressing identities
- relations between different minority groups and different types of inter-communal exchange

The deadline for proposal submissions is **14th January 2019**. Please send an abstract – of no more than 300 words – and a short academic biography to minoritiesconf2019@gmail.com. Successful applicants will be notified by 10th February, and are then required to circulate their presentation scripts no later than 10th April.

We particularly welcome submissions from early career academics.

Selected papers will also be considered for a post-conference publication in a special issue of a peer-reviewed academic journal.

For more information and updates see: <https://contestedminorities.wordpress.com/>