

Editorial

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To mark the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Durkheim's birth, a number of conferences were held during 2008 – beginning at Epinal, his hometown, then at Oxford, Paris, São Paulo, Warsaw and Berlin. As part of the effort to record this effervescence of activity, with its many different lines of research, the present issue of our journal includes a selection of articles based on contributions to these conferences, while others are planned for inclusion in the next issue. At the same time, preparations are under way for the publication of collections on specific themes – on Durkheim's roots, drawing on the conference at Epinal; on interpretations and applications of Durkheimian sociology in Brazil, drawing on the conference at São Paulo; and on the issue of solidarity, drawing on contributions to the conferences at Oxford and Berlin.

However, the year 2008 was eventful for another reason, and a question often raised at these gatherings was how a Durkheimian approach might help with understanding the crisis that was unfolding while they were taking place.

Accordingly, the present issue begins with new English translations of Durkheim's article of 1917, 'The Politics of the Future', and of the commentary by Jennifer Mergy, who rediscovered this long-lost text. For as well as the article's interest and importance in itself, it is a way to set the scene for the three essays that follow, in which Steven Lukes, Mike Gane and Edward Tiryakian explore Durkheimian perspectives on the nature and implications of a current period of crisis.