

Mobilizing for the Commons

10th Conference On Solidarity

27th European Meeting of Cultural Journals

Gdańsk, 4–6 November 2016

THEMATIC OUTLINE

In recent years, issues of solidarity have dominated political debates on both sides of the Atlantic. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, questions of inequality and solidarity have become intertwined, especially in countries that have implemented severe austerity measures. Over the past year in particular, questions of national and international solidarity have also been central with respect to the treatment of refugees and migrants. These 'crises' have led to polarization but also to an increase in grass-roots mobilization. These social movements express discontent with national governments and/or EU policies and create alternative forms of community support within European societies and beyond. Frequently, the commons have emerged as an alternative to privatization by market forces and state protectionism. The conference will take place in the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk, thus linking contemporary debates to the history of the broad, non-violent, anti-communist social movement that started in the city's shipyard in 1980.

We frame the general topic of solidarity with a focus on mobilizing for the commons by asking the following questions:

- Are new social movements mobilizations of resentment, or are they an expression of a longing for citizens' autonomy and new forms of belonging to communities of various kinds?
- Can the nation-state be the framework for solidarity in the 21st century, or is it only local communities and individuals that can be seen as actors for solidarity?
- How do the new social movements affect mainstream party politics, and how does party politics shape them in return?
- What forms of mobilization around the commons are gathering force and how successful are they?
- Can the notion of commons be used as a call for solidarity beyond affluent countries?
- How might the commons become an important part of national and global economies?
- How has political communication, especially in recent political campaigns, undermined concepts of the commons and solidarity, and is there anything that we can do about this?



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