

INTRODUCTION¹

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North American Anarchist Studies Network <http://naasn.org>

In November 2009 I had the distinct privilege and pleasure of helping co-organize the inaugural conference of the North American Anarchist Studies Network (NAASN) with Deric Shannon, Abbey Willis, Jesse Cohn, and Luis Fernandez. Having attended and presented at the second annual conference this past January at the Steelworkers Hall in Toronto, Canada, I can honestly say that it both met and exceeded the formidable success of its predecessor. If this is in any way a portent of things to come, we have every reason to believe that “NAASN 3”—which, we can only hope, will take place in sunnier and less Anglocentric climes—will prove an even greater triumph.

The articles featured in this special issue of *Theory In Action* represent a small but illustrative cross-section of the remarkably diverse range of issues and methodologies that were on display in Toronto. Taken individually, each article makes a unique, important, and inimitable contribution to a particular sphere of concern within the broader field of anarchist studies. Taken together, they not only speak volumes about the ongoing vitality of that field across North America, but also about the depth, rigor, and creativity which characterizes so much of its scholarly and theoretical output.

It would be a profound mistake to claim that anarchist studies is an altogether new phenomenon. As comrades like Jesse Cohn are keen to emphasize, anarchists have always exhibited a healthy capacity for and inclination toward self-reflection, and to this extent, at least, anarchists have always been invested in “anarchist studies” under some description or other. As a distinctive field of research, however, nothing like the

¹ Portions of the following will appear in *Anarchist Pedagogies*, ed. R. Haworth (PM Press, forthcoming 2011).

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