

[Page 27 - Fr. Jimmy Tompkins Speaking](#)ISSUE : [Issue 40](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/8/1

Fr. Jimmy Tompkins Speaking CAPE BRETON'S MAGAZINE will continue a series of articles both defining and questioning the Antigonish Movement. Knowing the history gives us a useable past to apply to real, current problems. If appropriate tools are there, those who need them will use them. We want to remind, over and over, that Fr. Coady said "we do not want to create a nation of shopkeepers"--with eyes only on dividends. He defined the Antigonish Movement as "adult education through economic cooperation." The co-op store was never the final goal. The PROCESS OF COOPERATION should lead to a successful yet more Humane community--and the philosophy of cooperation should be able to survive "good" times" as well as "bad." ' Fr. Jimmy Tompkins wrote this article in 1938. It was called "The Future of the Antigonish Movement." The Antigonish Movement is Adult Education. In forecasting its future, we must necessarily go into the content of Adult Education. We might ask ourselves, "What is its subject matter? What is its scope? Where is it most needed?" We all now believe that Education is co-extensive and co-terminous with life. There are no zones of human activity closed to the human mind. In whatever sphere of human experience, wherein there are unrequited needs of man, there is the ministry of the mind and the spirit. Adult Education is not limited to the multiplication table. It takes into account man as a spiritual being, it seeks to establish just relationships as between man and man in the economic order. It examines the mutual problems of producer and consumer. We are not so much concerned with setting the yard limits of Adult Education as we are with throwing the switches which will give the average man unobstructed passage to wider fields of knowledge, self-help and security, and let him find his own way. Beware of Institutionalizing If there is one warning, it is this--beware of institutionalizing • I can illustrate best what I mean by relating a story which they tell in New York about Lincoln Steffens. It is told of Mr. Steffens that he was one day walking down Broadway with the devil. They saw an ideal floating in the air. A passerby seized the ideal and put it in his pocket. Mr. Steffens said to the devil, "That is going to be bad for your business, isn't it?" "Oh, no," said the devil, "I'll teach him to organize it." When a thing becomes over-institutionalized, it tends to become sterile. It seems to me that that is what has happened to formal education. We might well ask ourselves if something similar has not happened to those religious people who sit back, at times like these, when so many millions have become propertyless, stricken with fear of economic insecurity, homeless waifs of a hit-and-miss industrialism. It is this kind of thing that enables severe critics of Christianity to say that religion is the opiate of the people. It

Ncrth Sydney Mall
116 King St, North Sydney, Nova Scotia • Climate Controlled Atmosphere • Plenty of Free Parking • Friendly Courteous Staff • 30 Stores and Services • Many Mall Activities "??'vneyC" (27)