

Adult Education and the Social Economy: Re-thinking the Communitarian Pedagogy of Watson Thomson

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Project Summary

In late 1944, Watson Thomson, a Scottish-born educator, organized and directed a Saskatchewan-wide adult education division. With similarities to the earlier Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia, the program attempted to facilitate the formation of a network of co-operative enterprises aimed at the cultural, social, and economic development of the Canadian Prairies. It is my contention that the reclamation of Thomson's educational framework, as described and contextualized through the story of Saskatchewan's Adult Education Division, can provide effective methodological considerations for contemporary adult education.

Key Objectives

- To provide an in-depth narrative of the activities of the Saskatchewan Adult Education Division throughout 1945
- To provide an in-depth analysis of the Personalist philosophy of Watson Thomson
- To isolate and standardize a pedagogical framework based on Thomson's educational activities and Personalisme
- To discuss the application of Thomson's framework to contemporary adult education initiatives and opportunities

Findings to Date

- Thomson's philosophy is based on a combination of Guild Socialism, Adlerian Psychology, and Monetary Reform
- The Saskatchewan Adult Education Division had helped with the development of nearly a hundred community-based study groups and enterprises by the time Thomson was forced to resign

Type of Award

Graduate Scholarship/Internship

Term of Project

September 2006 – June 2008



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