



## EDITH FOWKE'S BEQUEST TO THE GROUP OF 78

By Roy Culpeper, 21 January 2017

In early 2016, the Group of 78 was notified that it was one of ten organizations that had been named beneficiaries of a bequest from the estate of the late Edith Fowke, who died in 1996. The disbursement of the bequests was delayed for twenty years, until after the death of Edith's husband Franklin in 2003. Additionally, Edith Fowke's will did not make a definitive list of beneficiaries, but instead stipulated that up to ten beneficiary charitable organizations were to be named by Alan and Hanna Newcombe, peace activists of Dundas, Ontario. In 2004 Hanna Newcombe provided a list of ten charitable organizations working in the field of peace, development and human rights, in a letter to the Fowke estate trustees, but the letter was not acted upon until after Hanna's own death in 2011. Further delays were caused by litigation.

The ten organizations included Amnesty International, USC, Canadian Peace Alliance, World Federalists of Canada, Science for Peace, Quaker International, Project Ploughshares, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Peacefund Canada, and the Group of 78. During the court proceedings the Canadian Peace Alliance was found ineligible as it is not a registered charitable organization.

The nine remaining organizations were thus eligible to receive equal shares of the portion of the estate to be distributed, amounting to just over \$2 million. However, the estate had accrued tax liabilities in the intervening years, and these have to be settled. There were also legal and accounting fees to be paid. The amount distributed to each beneficiary would be net of these claims, thus less than \$220,000. An interim distribution of \$75,000 was made in December 2016, and an instalment of equal size was planned for the first half of 2017. The remainder would be disbursed by the end of 2017, presuming that tax and other liabilities had been settled. The final amount is likely to be between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

Edith Fowke (née Fulton) was born near Regina, Saskatchewan in 1913. Educated as a high school teacher, she developed an early interest in Prairie socialism and became interested in folksongs and folk lore of ordinary people, producing a weekly program for CBC radio between 1950 and 1974. Much of the material she used, previously unrecorded or unpublished, she discovered herself on field trips particularly in Ontario. Over her lifetime she published 20 books on folklore and folk music as well as producing several audio recordings.

Hanna Newcombe (née Hammerschlag), born in 1922 in Prague, fled with her parents from the Nazis in 1939 to Canada, where she obtained a doctorate in chemistry at the University of Toronto. She became interested in using science to advance the cause of peace, founding the Peace Research Institute in Dundas, Ontario. She was an active member of the World Federalists and Society of Friends (Quakers). At her death in 2011 she left a large body of writings on peace and international affairs.