

Frank Scott

1899 - 1985

*The world is my country
The human race is my race
The spirit of man is my God
The future of man is my heaven*
—F.R. Scott, Creed

This four-line poem, a humanist creed, touches squarely upon the purposes of the Group of 78. In distilled form, the poem summarizes F.R. Scott's understanding of and commitment to its ideals. He published eight volumes of poetry, much of it with a sharp political edge, and has an enduring reputation as one of Canada's leading and most witty poets.

By profession, he was a distinguished constitutional lawyer and teacher of the law. He was



social philosopher, a long-time Canadian nationalist, a socialist and a civil libertarian who believed passionately in human rights within the rule of law. Though he spent his working life in academe, he occasionally practised law, successfully arguing two landmark cases against the Duplessis Government of Quebec in the Supreme Court of Canada, including the Quebec Padlock Act aimed at undefined "Communists".

Before World War II he was an advocate for neutrality in a European war and independence from British policy. (His father Archdeacon Scott had been chaplain to the Canadian First Division in World War I.) However, in September 1939 as a member of the national council of the Commonwealth Cooperative Federation he was central to the compromise that allowed the CCF to draft its policy of democratic support for the War. He and David Lewis were its principal drafters.

Frank Scott was a Rhodes Scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford (1920-3). He began teaching constitutional law at McGill University in 1928 and much later served as Dean of Law (1961-4). He was a co-founder of the League for Social Reconstruction, 1931 (with, among others, two other founders of the Group of 78, J. King Gordon and Eugene

Forsey). He was one of the drafters of the Regina Manifesto (1932-3) and went on to become national chairman of the CCF (1942-50). In 1950-51, he co-founded *Récherches Sociales*.

On the international front, he acted as resident representative for a United Nations mission of technical assistance to Burma in 1952. He returned to serve a member of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-6). He became a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1967.

Frank Scott was married to another founding member of the Group of 78, the noted Canadian painter, Marian Dale Scott and they had one son, Peter Dale Scott.