Ask: How are you? NOT Who are you?

Reflections on Public Health and Peace

in Memory of Dr. Zofia Pakula

THE 2012 DR. ZOFIA PAKULA INAUGURAL LECTURE
WILL BE GIVEN BY

URSULA M. FRANKLIN, CC, FRSC
UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR EMERITA
SENIOR FELLOW, MASSEY COLLEGE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY

CATHARINE WHITESIDE
DEAN, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MEDICINE
VICE PROVOST, RELATIONS WITH HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS

Doctors Without Borders Canada
Global Health Division, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
Master of Global Affairs Program, Munk School of Global Affairs
and
Science for Peace

INVITE YOU TO JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2012
AT 5:00 PM

6TH FLOOR AUDITORIUM
155 COLLEGE STREET
Reflections on Public Health and Peace

Discussion Abstract by Ursula M. Franklin, October 2012

'There are deep foundational links between the concept of Public Health and the notion of Peace. My contribution to the Inaugural Dr. Zofia Pakula Lectureship will be to explore and delineate these correspondences in some detail and in so doing, show their structural relationships. Both the advancement of public health and the pursuit of peace are based on the reality of the interdependence of people. Dr. Pakula knew very well from her own life's experience that neither physical health nor social wellbeing are solely individual attributes but both are embedded in and partially defined by the collective environment.

Studies of communicable diseases and of the spread of infection and illness have provided the basic rational for current national and international public health protocols and regulations that are binding on friend and foe. However imperfect it may seem, this network of disaster protection developed slowly and incrementally from the local to the global arena and works for the benefit of all.

To celebrate the extraordinary life of Dr. Pakula, this lecture will recognize some facets of past and present struggles to advance Public Health, Peace and constructive Conflict Resolution for all world populations.

Over the past decades, Peace research and conflict resolution initiatives have yielded impressive insights, improving local and regional mitigations of tensions around the world. Still, the global war - peace situation and health of the environment remains dismal. Furthermore, the central understanding and concern of common dangers that require common action for the common good is not emphasized in most current approaches to peace studies.

I will attempt to illustrate ways for Public Health and Peace Studies to refocus their efforts more towards the genesis of the problems they study in order "to be genuinely helpful", as Dr. Pakula would have expressed it.

Ursula M. Franklin

Biography

Ursula M. Franklin received her Ph.D. in experimental physics at the Technical University of Berlin in 1948. She came to Canada the following year and began a distinguished scientific career in Toronto. In 1967 she joined the University of Toronto's Department of Metallurgy and Materials Science, becoming a full professor in 1973. She has published more than 70 scholarly papers and major contributions to books on the structure and properties of metals and alloys, and the history and social impact of technology. Her contributions to CBC Radio's Ideas program include: Democracy, Technology, and Terrorism (1979), Nuclear Peace (1982), The Northern Front (1986), and Complexity and Management (1987). Her 1989 Massey Lectures have been published in her book, The Real of Technology.

Dr. Franklin is a Companion of the Order of Canada, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and has been a board member of the National Research Council and the Science Council of Canada, where she headed the Conserver Society Study. She has received honorary degrees from many Canadian universities. In 1984 she became the first woman to be honored with the title of University Professor by the University of Toronto.

In addition to her significant contributions as a scientist, Dr. Franklin is known for her achievements as a humanitarian through community activities. She received the award of merit for the City of Toronto in 1982, mainly for her contribution to neighborhood planning. She has provided technical advice to community groups on such issues as pollution and radiation. As a Quaker, she has been actively involved in work for peace and justice, international understanding, and issues related to women. As an active member of the Voice of Women, and a member of its national council, she has been involved in many of the organization's activities, from coordinating the collection of children's teeth for strontium-90 radiation measurements in the early 1960s, to co-drafting submissions to the Senate inquiry into science policy.

In 1987, Dr. Franklin was awarded the Elsi Gregory McGill memorial award for her contributions to education, science, and technology. In 1989, she received the Wiegand Award, which recognizes Canadians who have made outstanding contributions to our understanding of the human dimensions of science and technology.

Ursula Franklin's 1990 award of the Order of Ontario followed her nomination by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, which read: Dr. Franklin has made significant contributions to the life of Ontario as a scientist, educator, citizen, and humanitarian. She has enriched the lives of her colleagues, students, and staff that have been privileged to work with her. Her concerns about the quality of all our lives, particularly as they are affected by science and technology, have always been accompanied by action on behalf of those beliefs to help solve problems. She serves as an inspiration to women in society, in the university in general, and especially in the scientific, technological, and engineering fields, where she has been a role model in an environment populated by very few female faculty members. Dr. Franklin is truly an example of someone who lives her convictions, who is not afraid to act on the basis of her beliefs, and whose presence among us helps to make this world a better place to live. Ursula Franklin was awarded the Pearson Peace medal in January 2002, by the United Nations Association in Canada.
How much adversity can a person face and still triumph? Zofia Graubart Pakula was born in a Jewish home in Płock, Poland on December 13, 1919. She lost her mother at birth. It was because of this enormous tragedy that she had always wanted to become a physician and heal people. While other little girls played with their dolls, she pretended to operate and put bandages on hers. On September 1, 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland, and like many others, Zofia, her father, stepmother, two stepbrothers, and her fiancé, a graduate student of microbiology, Roman Pakula, fled to the east. They settled in Lwów, a formerly Polish city absorbed by the Soviet Union. Zofia and Roman married on January 10, 1940.

After Hitler broke his pact with Stalin and invaded the Soviet Union in June of 1941, Lwów was no longer safe. Sadly, Zofia’s father’s family could not escape and were murdered by the Nazis. Roman was conscripted into the Soviet army and fought in several battles including the decisive one in Stalingrad. Zofia, armed with the fluent knowledge of German and false papers in the name of Pakulska, chose to take her chances and return to Warsaw. What great irony it was that the language she once loved, the language of Heine, Goethe, and Schiller, became the language of murderers, but also greatly helped her to survive the war.

Under Nazi occupation, businesses belonging to Jews and later Poles were confiscated and given to Polish citizens of German background. With her excellent German, Zofia found a job as an administrator in a hosiery factory. Her life in Warsaw was a nightmare. She was always hungry and looked in the windows of bakeries and imagined eating the bread she could not afford. She saw Jews being captured and killed. She saw a young Jewish boy killed by a Nazi who repeatedly smashed his head against a wall. In possession of a life-giving P patch, for Pole, rather than the deadly yellow Star of David J, for Jew, she spent every waking moment in fear of being found out. How incredibly brave she was.

Things were very difficult and then, unbelievably, in the fall of 1943, they got worse. Someone from Płock, someone driven solely by unreasoned hate saw Zofia with her P and, deciding that she did not deserve to live, informed the Gestapo. She never found out who it was. Luck intervened though, as Zofia was at work when the Gestapo came for her. At the time Zofia was staying with two women whose husbands, former Polish army officers, were in Auschwitz. The women gave the Nazis a misleading and wrong description of her appearance. Thankfully unaware that her life was in peril, she came home passing by the two Germans waiting nearby. Once inside, her friends advised her to leave Warsaw, to hide out in a nearby forest, and, once there, to find the place where she could contact the Resistance. She spent more than two weeks in the forest, a young woman all alone, fearful, starving assuming her life – with enormous grace, strength and courage.

The Resistance told Zofia that she should go to the railroad station and volunteer for the German war effort. As the Nazis were great record keepers, she was advised to change the destination she would be assigned and provided with an eraser and a pencil to do so. She erased Munich and put Vienna instead. In Vienna, she did back breaking work and, together with a group of women, mostly Greek, she did her best to sabotage the German war effort. She continued to starve. When the Soviet Army liberated Vienna in the spring of 1945 women tried to look and dress old so as not to be raped. Although finally safe, she suffered a nearly fatal case of typhus. She remembered a Red Cross medic waving his hand to indicate that she would not make it.

Zofia had never thought to mention one incident that came to light some time after the war. Roman found out when a package arrived from Vienna containing a beautiful antique ornament and letter from a man thanking Zofia for saving his life. He had been an elderly janitor at the factory where she worked and was as helpful as possible to the starving workers. After liberation, a Soviet soldier saw a German man and he aimed his rifle. Zofia placed herself in front of the man and then a Soviet officer interfered.

In 1964, Roman, who was well respected in his field, had an offer from the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories in Toronto. Soon after, he joined the University of Toronto Department of Microbiology as a Professor and later as Acting Department Chair. A few months later, Zofia and son Andrew joined him in Canada. To get her license to practice medicine in Canada Zofia had to pass a series of strenuous exams in a new language. In her mid-forties, she went through more than two years of tough medical residencies, sometimes working twenty-four hour shifts together with people twenty years younger. At the time, fewer than half of foreign trained physicians completed the stringent requirements. She changed the focus of her practice to work with the developmentally challenged and their families and took a job with the Surrey Place Centre. In addition, she provided psychiatric evaluations for about three hundred Holocaust survivors assessing their loss of earning ability due to Nazi persecution. Her reports were used by the German government to determine the size of pensions to be paid to the victims. There were always grateful patients and some years after she retired she received a phone call from a mother of one of her patients saying: ‘Dr. Pakula - you saved my life and I pray for you every day.’

Roman died in 1986. Even after turning sixty-five, Zofia continued to work nine months a year for five years, spending the winters in Florida. In her retirement, she was very active enjoying movies, books, concerts, bridge and Scrabble. She always walked as far as she could – whether ten kilometers daily with the joy of Roman’s survival and the news that sister Jadzia was safe in Palestine. Zofia was now determined to follow her dream to become a physician. When circumstances permitted, she entered medical school in Warsaw and graduated in 1959, specializing in rheumatology: The first time a patient of hers died she cried and cried. There were always flowers and chocolates from grateful patients. In 1963 she spent nearly a year in Paris doing research on rheumatic heart disease in children, working and living in French.

Whatever the circumstances, she always did her best. People who met her stayed in touch. Fun loving and with a great sense of humor, she was a joy to be around. She was always kind, giving, and considerate. She faced the worst ordeals with a smile that always touched my soul. She was the best mother anybody could have.
The 2012 Dr. Zofia Pakula Lecture
Planning Committee

DONALD COLE
Global Health Division, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
www.sph.utoronto.ca

STEPHEN CORNISH
Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders Canada
www.msf.ca

CHANDLER DAVIS
Science for Peace
www.scienceforpeace.ca

JUDY KOPelow
Global Health Division, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
www.ghd-si.utoronto.ca

RON LEVI
Master of Global Affairs Program, Munk School of Global Affairs
www.munkschool.utoronto.ca/mga

ANDREW PAKULA
Founder, Dr. Zofia Pakula Lectureship

Special thanks to

MARILYN MCHARG

JAMES ORBINSKI

and

CAROLINE PEREIRA