

News and opinion from the international medical movement to abolish nuclear weapons and to prevent war

IPPNW mourns co-founder Dr. Bernard Lown (1921-2021), calls on people worldwide to continue his legacy

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by IPPNW

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), 1985 Nobel Peace laureate organization, mourns the loss yesterday of our co-founder Dr. Bernard Lown, just months short of his 100th birthday.

Dr. Lown was a tireless visionary and pragmatic activist whose example continues to inspire countless physicians, students, and citizens worldwide. Those who knew Dr. Lown know that he would insist that the most meaningful way to honor his memory will be to carry on his work.



IPPNW's founding co-president Dr. Bernard Lown, 1921-2021.

IPPNW was founded in 1980, when a renewed nuclear arms race between the superpowers clearly threatened all of human civilization. Dr. Lown, who in 1961 had co-founded Physicians for Social Responsibility in the US to combat the dangers of nuclear war, believed that a revitalized and greatly expanded international “physicians movement” was required. Building from his friendship with leading Soviet cardiologist Dr. Evgueni Chazov that had grown out of their cardiovascular research collaborations, Dr. Lown, Dr. Eric Chivian, and Dr. Jim Muller met in Geneva with Dr. Chazov and two of the most senior Soviet physicians, Dr. Mikhail Kuzin and Dr. Leonid Ilyin. Setting aside all other issues, they committed to working together on behalf of human survival, and to launching and building an organization they named International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.





Dr. Lown and founding co-president Eugeni Chazov accepted the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of IPPNW.

The histories of **PSR** (<http://www.psr.org>) and **IPPNW** (<http://www.ippnw.org>) are available in detail elsewhere. Dr. Lown's book **Prescription for Survival: A Doctor's Journey to End Nuclear Madness**, ([https://www.amazon.com/Prescription-Survival-Doctors-Journey-Nuclear-ebook/dp/B005M0D0CI/ref=sr_1_2?](https://www.amazon.com/Prescription-Survival-Doctors-Journey-Nuclear-ebook/dp/B005M0D0CI/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=Bernard+lown&qid=1613597189&s=books&sr=1-2)

[dchild=1&keywords=Bernard+lown&qid=1613597189&s=books&sr=1-2](https://www.amazon.com/Prescription-Survival-Doctors-Journey-Nuclear-ebook/dp/B005M0D0CI/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=Bernard+lown&qid=1613597189&s=books&sr=1-2)) was published in 2008. As Dr. Lown said in his 1985 Nobel Address:

Only those who see the invisible can do the impossible. But in order to do the impossible, in the words of Jonathan Schell, we ask "not for our personal survival: we ask only that we be survived. We ask for assurance that when we die as individuals, as we know we must, mankind will live on..."

Dr. Lown stepped down as IPPNW's co-president in 1993, passing the torch to new generations of physicians and medical students throughout the world, which went on to launch in 2007 the **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons** (<http://www.icanw.org/>) that was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

To honor Dr. Lown, we invite people inspired by his legacy to share your memories and express your thoughts to us.

We look forward to celebrating Dr. Lown's 100th birthday on June 7, 2021, and joining with others throughout the world on that day to rededicate ourselves to fulfilling his and IPPNW's founding vision.

Excerpts from Nobel Lecture, December 11, 1985 by Dr. Bernard Lown
(<https://www.ippnw.org/about/ippnw-a-brief-history/1985-nobel-peace-prize>)

Never Whisper in the Presence of Wrong—Selections from Speeches on Nuclear War and Global Survival by Bernard Lown
(https://ippnwupdate.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/never_whisper_in_the_presence_of_wrong.pdf)

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