

# PRESCRIPTION FOR SURVIVAL

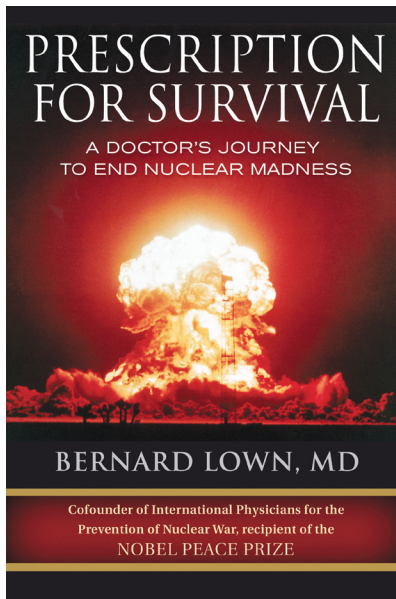
A DOCTOR'S JOURNEY  
TO END NUCLEAR MADNESS



BERNARD LOWN, MD

Cofounder of International Physicians for the  
Prevention of Nuclear War, recipient of the  
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Available in July 2008 from Berrett-Koehler Publishers



**Bernard Lown, MD**, is Professor of Cardiology Emeritus at Harvard and is the inventor of the defibrillator. In addition to cofounding International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, he cofounded Physicians for Social Responsibility, SATELLIFE, ProCOR, and the Lown Cardiovascular Research Foundation. He is the author of *The Lost Art of Healing*.

Publication date: July 2008  
\$35.00, hardcover, 488 pages  
6 1/8" x 9 1/4"  
ISBN 978-1-57675-482-5  
Item #94825-803

Bernard Lown, MD  
Foreword by Howard Zinn

## Prescription for Survival

A Doctor's Journey to End Nuclear Madness

- A dramatic memoir by a Nobel Prize winner and medical pioneer
- Shows how concerned citizens working together can change the course of history
- Analyzes what really drove the cold war and what continues to drive nuclear proliferation today

"How close we came to extinction, and it is forgotten now." So begins Nobel Prize-winner Bernard Lown's story of his fight against the nuclear symptom of what he calls "the disease of militarism." It is still an active and highly contagious disease, as witnessed by events in Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and all too many other places. And as this extraordinary memoir vividly demonstrates, it can be stopped only by concerned citizens working together.

In 1981, brimming with anxiety about the escalating nuclear confrontation with the Russians, Lown launched a USA-USSR antinuclear movement with Soviet cardiologist Evgeni Chazov: International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). Over the next four years, Lown and Chazov recruited more than 150,000 doctors worldwide to join their movement, held numerous international conferences, met with world political leaders, and appeared on specially produced television programs broadcast throughout the USSR and the U.S. In 1985, despite active opposition from the U.S. government and NATO, Lown and Chazov accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of IPPNW.

This compelling story is told with a vibrancy of language that illuminates dramatic scenes such as the historic IPPNW symposium (chaired by astrophysicist Carl Sagan) that brought together an American admiral, a Russian general, and a British field marshal at the height of the cold war; Lown, during a routine medical exam, persuading King Hussein of Jordan to join the antinuclear cause; the heart attack of a Russian journalist at an IPPNW press conference; and Lown's frank face-to-face conversations with Gorbachev. Although this book is concerned with weapons of almost unimaginable destructive capacity and a potential clash of superpowers, Lown writes, "At the heart of these cascading events is a human narrative."

Nuclear weapons are still very much with us, and we forget this at our peril. "Historical amnesia is a prelude for repeated victimization," Lown says. "With the end of the cold war, the nuclear genie was not rebottled, merely hidden from view." *Prescription for Survival* probes the past to help us understand what drove, and continues to drive, nuclear proliferation and offers a blueprint showing how we can join together across national boundaries to end it.



**Berrett-Koehler Publishers**

Available in July 2008 from your favorite bookseller or preorder now on Amazon.com  
or at Berrett-Koehler's website [www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

## Foreword by Howard Zinn

It is a rare and welcome phenomenon when someone renowned in some sphere of science or art crosses into the arena of social struggle and dares to speak out on matters of peace and justice. One thinks of Albert Einstein, incomparable in his field, becoming a vocal advocate of peace. Or Bertrand Russell, world-famous philosopher, drafting, along with Einstein, a “Manifesto” against war. Or Noam Chomsky, pioneering linguist, turning his intelligence towards the most trenchant criticism of militarism and war.

Dr. Bernard Lown is a distinguished member of that small circle, having first attained international prominence as a cardiologist, and then becoming a founder of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. In the pages that follow, he recounts his journey, and an exciting one it is, in which the trajectory of his own life intersects with the most dangerous years of the nuclear age,

In the year 1980, when the IPPNW was founded, the “Doomsday Clock” of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which the scientists had set up to measure the danger of nuclear war, was set at seven minutes to midnight. The editors of the Bulletin published a discouraging editorial, in which they described the Soviet Union and the United States as “nucleoholics”, unable to shake their addiction to nuclear weapons. The following year, with Ronald Reagan now president, the cold war rhetoric intensified and the Doomsday Clock was set at four minutes to midnight.

By 1984, relations between the two superpowers had reached a low point and the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists told its readers: “Every channel of communications has been constricted or shut down; every form of contact has been attenuated or cut off.” The Doomsday clock was now at three minutes to midnight.

It was in this forbidding atmosphere, against great odds, that Bernard Lown and his colleagues in IPPNW struggled to create citizen to citizen contact between American and Soviet doctors as a way of breaking through the wall of hostility between the two nations., Central to this effort to bridge the cold war divide by human contact was the developing relationship between Dr. Lown and the distinguished Soviet

cardiologist, Dr. Eugene Chazov, The story of their friendship in this book is an unreported piece of history, in which obstacles of ideology and bureaucracy had to be overcome to create a bond in the interests of a peaceful world.

Dr. Lown and his colleagues in IPPNW, persisting in their efforts to create Soviet –American dialogue, encountered intense hostility in the press and the public. They were accused of being “pro-Soviet”, “anti-American”, “unpatriotic”, consorting with “the enemy”.

In defiance of this vitriol, they persisted in speaking above the heads of the political leaders in Washington, to the public at large, pointing out to them, with the precision of scientists, the horrific consequences of nuclear war, and suggesting the absolute necessity for dialogue instead of conflict. The IPPNW was acting out the spirit of democracy, in which not governments, but people are sovereign.

The participation of doctors was natural. They were healers. They were guardians of life. Physicians from all over the world joined the IPPNW, soon numbering 135,000 doctors in 40 countries.

The public was growing more and more aware of the threat of nuclear war. The movement for a nuclear freeze grew, as city councils and state legislatures responded to public opinion, and even the House of Representatives voted in favor of a freeze on nuclear weapons. The culmination of the movement was an enormous gathering of almost a million people in the summer of 1982 in New York City.

The efforts of the IPPNW were given dramatic recognition in 1985 by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, with Bernard Lown and Eugene Chazov invited to Oslo to receive the prize. Dr. Lown in his acceptance speech, recognized the obstacles to peace, but asked his listeners: “Hold fast to dreams”.

He conveys in this book the excitement of the occasion, including the famous incident of a member of the audience having a heart attack, with the two cardiologists Lown and Chazov, working to resuscitate the man, who survived the ordeal.

There were repercussions to the awarding of the prize to the IPPNW, For instance, the Wall Street Journal said that the Prize committee had hit “a new low” in this award,. (The Journal did not react similarly when Henry Kissinger, one of the promoters of the war in

Vietnam, was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.) Dr. Lown gives us a fascinating account of the details surrounding the award.

By this time, Mikhail Gorbachev was head of the Soviet Union, and there were new possibilities on the horizon. Lown recounts a fascinating conversation with Gorbachev where, with characteristic boldness, he raises the question of the exile of the Soviet dissident Sakharov and also pressed Gorbachev to extend the Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing. On both counts, there was success.

While the book concentrates on the critical cold war years of the 1980s, Lown concludes with a penetrating analysis of the foreign policy of the United States today. He points to the parallels with the cold war – “terrorism” replacing “communism” as fear grows into hysteria, resulting in irrational violence.

This is not just a remarkable history – personal and political – but a call to action. It is a plea to readers to speak up, to act. It tells us that history only takes a turn for the better when citizens, refusing to wait for governments, decide they must themselves join the long march towards a peaceful world. .

Howard Zinn, Author of *A People's History of the United States*

## Early endorsements

“The former head of the US Strategic Command, General Lee Butler, renouncing his life-long commitment to nuclear arms, issued a plea for sanity: “By what authority do succeeding generations of leaders in the nuclear-weapons states usurp the power to dictate the odds of continued life on our planet? Most urgently, why does such breathtaking audacity persist at a moment when we should stand trembling in the face of our folly and united in our commitment to abolish its most deadly manifestations?” There is no better response than the dramatic story recounted here by the remarkable physician and peace activist Bernard Lown, whose courageous efforts have helped forge a path that might save the species from suicide, if enough people can muster the kind of will and determination and “hard-headed optimism” that he has so impressively demonstrated, and eloquently recorded here.”

**Noam Chomsky** University Professor Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Pioneering linguist, linguist, author and political activist.

---

This is a gripping tale of how one brilliant and committed man launched a worldwide movement that saved us from the brink of nuclear annihilation. The doctors’ movement to eliminate nuclear weapons was one of the most powerful but least well-known political developments of the last quarter-century. Lown’s rendering is not only a fascinating insiders’ tale of his experience moving the highest levels of government, but a powerful analysis for breaking the stalemate of escalating militarism and post-9/11 conflict. Whoever you are—a concerned citizen, student of history, intellectual or just someone who loves a great story, you can’t afford

to neglect this doctor's prescription for survival. One of the most important books of the twenty-first century.

**Professor Juliet Schor**, author of New York Times best seller “The Overworked American” and the just published “Sustainable Planet: Solutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. Chair Department Sociology Boston College

---

Dr. Lown in *Prescription for Survival*, describes a movement of physicians that changed the course of the mightiest powers on Earth threatening nuclear annihilation of the planet. The prescription offered is equally relevant to winning current struggles of impoverished and oppressed humanity for peace and justice.

**Dr. Mubashir Hasan** Pakistani author, columnist, leader of India-Pakistan Peace movement, former Minister of Finance, Planning and Development, Jailed six times for human rights activism.

---

This absorbing book charts the course of Lown's odyssey and, even more importantly, illustrates how the medical and moral views of a committed and eloquent physician and his colleagues can alter the thinking and the policies of the public, the press, and politicians and military leaders. If humanity survives the nuclear arm race, Dr. Lown will deserve much of the credit for our survival.

**Victor W. Sidel**, MD Distinguished University Professor of Social Medicine Albert Einstein College of Medicine; Past President, American Public Health Association

---

What a story, what a book – a unique fabric of history woven with heart threads! It says so much about priority - what is needed when we are threatened existentially, what is possible when the right man

or woman at the right place does the right thing with vision and perseverance, igniting the spark of enthusiasm in other human beings of kindred spirit. Many physicians who had the privilege to meet Bernard Lown and to work with him in IPPNW became witnesses of a breath taking experience, of a series of miracles, of the transformation of enemy images into friendship, became witnesses of historic changes. For me this unique experience is the foundation of my conviction: We will make it, we will learn, we can also stop climate change and keep our beautiful planet inhabitable, soon enough, together.

**Dr. Martin Vosseler** Swiss environmental activist. Recipient of European environmental Solar award -2007, pioneer in crossing Atlantic ocean in a solar powered catamaran; founder of Swiss PSR. (Dec 28, 2007)

---

Dr. Lown's *Prescription for Survival* may very well be the most important prescription he has written in his long and distinguished career as a physician. This is a book I would prescribe for every friend of civilization and opponent of nuclear war (in other words, every sane human being).

**Jerome Rubin** founder of LEXIS and NEXIS, inducted in the Information Industry Hall of Fame

---

Dr. Lown is a marvelous story teller. "*Prescription for Survival*" grabs the reader's attention to the complex set of circumstances that caused the two super powers to start a process of nuclear de-escalation. There is much to be learned from this book on how to mobilize the opinions of citizens and leaders in the search for a greater good.



**V. Kasturi Rangan** Malcolm P. McNair Professor of Marketing at the Harvard Business School.

---

"This fascinating saga of a small band of remarkable physicians who helped build an international movement to save humankind from nuclear destruction contains important lessons for mobilizing public opinion today to address crucial challenges such as global warming, HIV/AIDS, and malaria. Bernard Lown's insider account of the profoundly important movement he helped to create is must-reading for anyone interested in how social and policy change comes about."

**Jay A. Winsten**, Ph.D. Associate Dean Harvard School of Public Health

---

This engaging memoir both reveals how a successful movement can be achieved and recalls the threat nuclear weapons still pose. The book provides needed impetus toward eliminating these weapons while we may still have an opportunity.

**Krishna Dasaratha, (neighbor) junior high school student, Cambridge, MA**

---