

UNHEALTHY WARS



In 1985, a mere five years after its formation, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) had over 135,000 members in 40 countries, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and had accelerated its agenda to the scope of global concern. By communicating the health impacts of nuclear warfare, IPPNW reframed the issue of nuclear war as a health issue.

Realizing the risks to public health from the threat of a nuclear war, two cardiologists — Bernhard Lown (a US-born developer of the direct current defibrillator for cardiac resuscitation) and Evgeny Chazov (a Russian-born director of the Moscow Cardiological Center and a physician to former

general secretaries of the Communist Party, such as Mikhail Gorbachev) — began an unlikely collaboration to form International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in 1980.



Members of IPPNW in various countries engaged in a global education campaign about the medical consequences of nuclear war. They rallied together in the thousands to stage protests, organized appeals, lobbied political and military leaders, and hosted several international conferences.



Through these activities the IPPNW called attention to the dire health implications of nuclear war; they warned the public and the leaders that the medical profession would be unable to provide effective care in the aftermath of a nuclear attack.

The IPPNW often countered misinformation, provided health and medical related facts, and highlighted the incapacity of the health systems to cope with the unprecedented demands of a nuclear blast.



These facts were also echoed by the American Medical Association, the British Medical Association, the World Health Organization, and other leading medical bodies.