

Dawning of The Nuclear Age

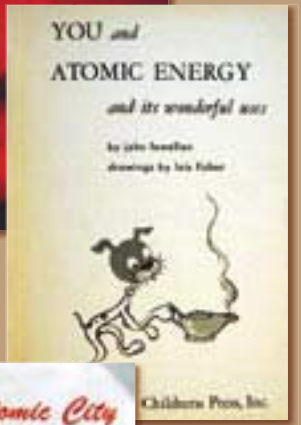
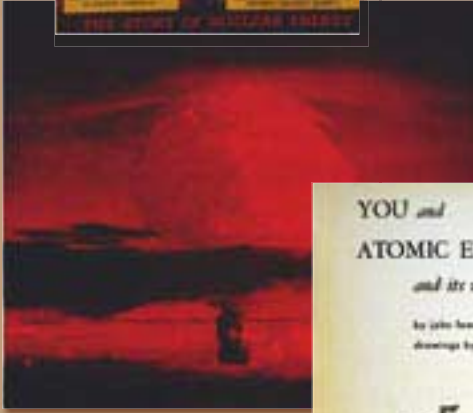
“Few scientific discoveries have provoked as much reaction from public opinion as has nuclear power. Controlled technology for some, diabolical invention at the hands of sorcerer’s apprentices for others, it acts as a catalyst for the torments of our time, some of which reflect the oldest myths in the collective subconscious. Beyond simplistic dualism, however, we must seek to understand a philosophy, which opposed to our own, refuses to accept the risks inherent in industrialized society. Above all, we must respond to the deep-rooted fears of the public who, starved for objective information, exaggerate the danger. We must firmly state our position, for an awareness of the ambivalence that we project on the world is not an excuse to be satisfied with the situation. Faced with the risk of energy shortage, nuclear power takes up the challenge. Properly controlled, far from posing a threat to mankind, it offers a cheap and abundant source of energy. But this act must be proclaimed and explained.”

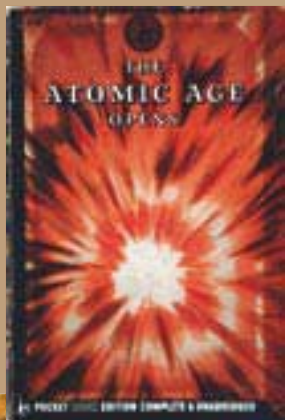
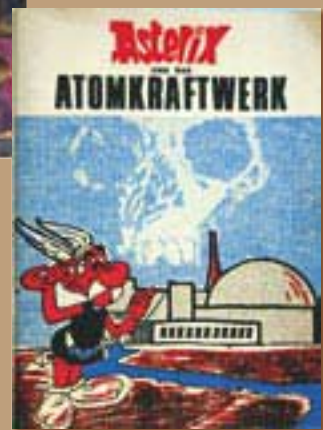
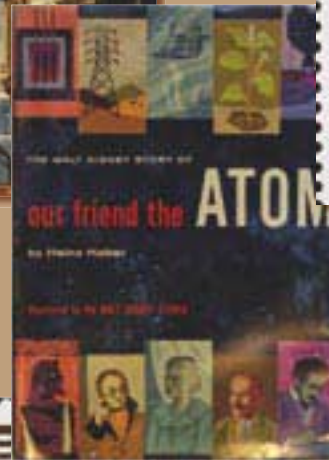
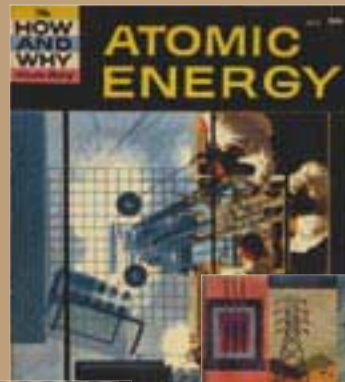
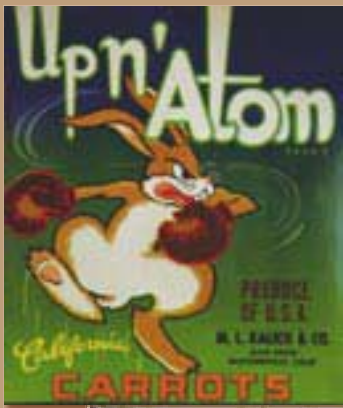
— Jacques Leclercq, “The Nuclear Age”, 1986

The promise and peril of atomic energy has its roots in the years immediately following the Second World War. Against this backdrop—in a society awed by the power inherent in nuclear activities to be both beneficial and devastating—US President Dwight Eisenhower delivered his “Atoms for Peace” speech, thereby marking the dawning of a new age.

The duality of the day—and the challenges in years that followed—was reflected in the literature, leisure activities and trinkets of the times.

Credit: Images have been taken from the personal collections of
Laban Coblentz and Lothar Wedekind.
Photos: Dean Calma/IAEA





I'm a Bury Little Atom,
 I split myself in two
 And multiply as many times
 As I have jobs to do!
 I'll work for you for pennies,
 I'm fast, efficient, steady—
 So any time... to ease your work—
 Just "plug in," folks—I'm Reddy!

The Mighty Atom
Reddy Kilowatt
 Your Electric Servant....