

Will Eugene ever be nuclear free?

By Pat Malach
Emerald Associate Editor

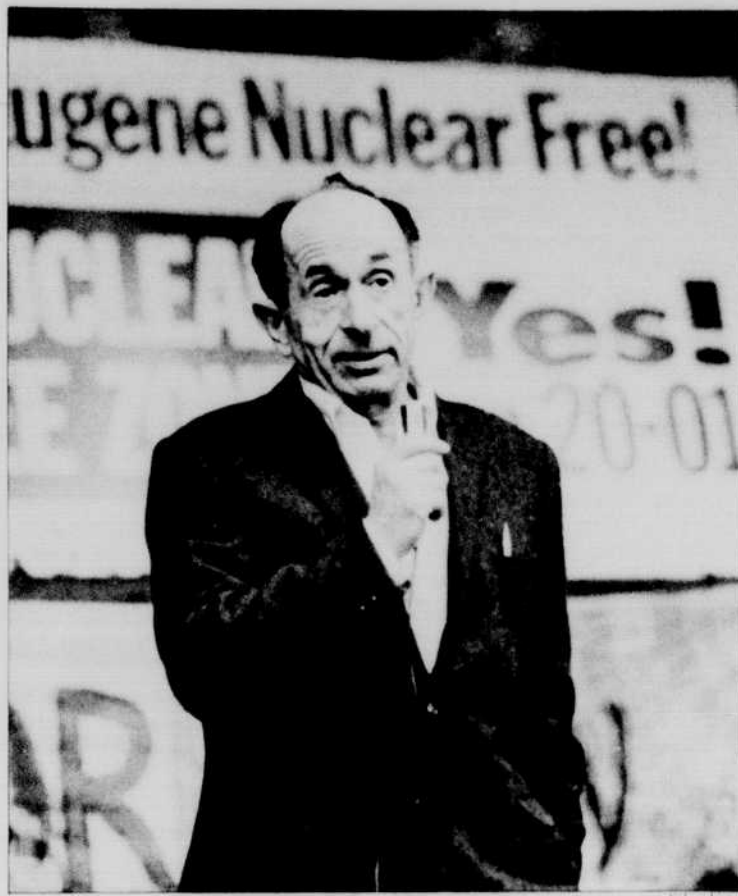
Imagine if you will, a place where people who innocently design a nuclear weapon intended for their own personal use could face a fine of as much as \$750.

Imagine a dimension where the design, development, manufacture, production, maintenance, or storage of nuclear weapons or their components has been banned. Come with me now as we journey into the little known world of ... the nuclear free zone.

In this seemingly innocent little town called Eugene, an invisible, yet all too real, undercurrent of divisiveness has separated friends and neighbors into two polarized groups. One favors tough and enforceable anti-nuclear laws, while the other leans toward symbolic gestures that will still allow the city to attract businesses that might be frightened by an activist population.

While Eugene and Lane County have had nuclear free zones since 1986, the issue surfaced again last year as the citizens group, Committee to Keep Eugene Nuclear Free, sought to add a stronger nuclear free policy to the city's charter.

The charter amendment measure was soundly defeated by Eugene voters in May. It would not only have banned nuclear weapons, it would also have banned components used in their delivery systems, in addition to prohibiting food irradiation and civil defense drills



File photo

Aaron Novick, former director of the Institute of Molecular Biology, spoke last spring in support of Eugene's nuclear free zone ordinance.

within city limits. In addition, an elected board would have been formed to enforce the rules of the policy.

The charter amendment closely resembled an ordinance passed by voters in 1986 and again in 1988. Those ordinances were changed by the city council because of ques-

tions of constitutionality.

Proponents of the tougher policy have said the city council ignored the mandate of the people when the council watered down the ordinance that voters had accepted. By making the policy part of the city char-

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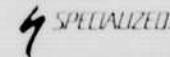
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