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ly in the sense that at least it affirms nationalism to a good end."

Back to the NDP. Now that it's all counted up and settled and Jo Valentine has turned up as your only representative, how much effect do you think she's going to have?

"It's difficult to know at this stage what Jo Valentine's position will be — clearly she's going to be an independent, but whether she's going to end up aligning herself with the Labour Party or anyone else a lot and how much influence she's going to be able to bring to bear, we don't know. We don't really expect her to have a great deal of input into legislation and certainly she won't be determining the outcome of votes. We see the Parliament as being a legitimate platform for an articulate anti-nuclear spokesperson to operate from. We see Parliament as providing us with those resources and we see an opportunity for that person in the house to address herself to those matters of legislation which relate to the nuclear issue."

The NDP went into the campaign as a self-confessed single-issue party. Can you see it ultimately turning into a broad-fronted alternative or radical party?

"I think that things are happening sufficiently dramatically and so quickly at present that it's difficult to make any kind of accurate predictions as to what will happen in the future. I do believe that the kind of influence we're having on the electorate and on other political parties and political groups is pretty strong and if there is to be the development of some kind of broad, alternative political coalition, then we may well be a part of it. But whether that will happen in two years or not I don't know. We do have Green parties in Australia, but they're pretty small. They've got good people in them but they're not very well organised — the NDP is pretty well organised. One of the things I've tried to stress is that you've got to be well organised and you've got to have your act together. You can't sit and around and talk, you've got to do. And in a sense we've been able to get past the arguments that a lot of small groups have about what the other issues that are important are. And I'm hoping that kind of debate is going to exist outside the NDP, rather than within it, because I think that would really slow us down. But at some point there may be a chance for us to join up with other people. I personally would like to see a broader-based political alternative at some stage in the future. I'm not saying I want to be the person who gets up on the TV and talks about it, but I think that it's very healthy and very necessary. I think it's great to say no to nuclear weapons but you've got to start saying no to all the other stuff that goes with

them. We're really talking about renewable energy, sustaining economies ... We're going to see an enormous crash here in the Western World in economies within the next two years I would guess. So people who are talking about that sort of stuff will generally get a lot of people, left and right on their side."

Do you see yourselves as giving a shot in the arm to the left and the rank and file of the ALP in that you've challenged Hawke's moderate line?

"Yeah, providing they don't come round and beat me up first!" (laughs)

The nuclear issue does seem to have brought the left of the party more back into focus.

"We can only hope, we can only hope ..."

You have a strong Labour background yourself, don't you?

"Yes, I was a Labour voter."

Do you still have faith in the Labour movement, in the light of what has happened?

"In the light of what's happened here I do. And I'm not that far removed from social democrat parties, provided that can institute change. But if they themselves are products of structures that cannot change and thus cannot change either, then we've got to go somewhere else. But no, I'm not totally disillusioned with it. I'm hoping that the purpose of the Nuclear Disarmament Party will be to get these issues back onto the agenda properly — and then I can go back to making music." **Obviously your fellow band members are behind your actions in temporarily stepping away from the band for the sake of this cause but won't there come a time when the business people you have commitments to will kick up a fuss?**

"Sure, absolutely. That's just something that I've got to try and work out with them this year. I think I'll probably get to a point where I'll wake up in the morning and say wow, how long is it since I picked up a guitar? How long is it since I sang? How long is it since I've just sat around and been a muso — which is really what I am. And is that part of my life going to go again? I've got to figure those things through. In a sense I have my own commitment to going out and working some of these issues through if it's useful to do so and the Oils are right behind me. I also think it's good, especially in Australia, where we're a big band, to disappear for a while and let other bands come into the gaps."

The interesting thing is in this country you're almost certainly better known as an anti-nuclear activist than as a rock singer in a band called Midnight Oil.

"Yeah, that is quite fascinating ..."

Do you think change is going to depend on the emergence of other spokesmen with youth ap-

peal, people who are charismatic to the young, rather an established politicians or activists? You confessed yourself to being a relative "Johnny-come-lately" to the cause in your speech today.

"I think it's just fortuitous — if you've got a famous mug and you're well known and you're a 'rock star', as they call you, then it's a great thing to be able to leap into this with. But at the same time my campaign would only have sustained itself on its celebrity aspect for about a week, unless there was something behind it. You've got to have that ability to articulate and to understand it and go out and do it. And I think I'm just probably well-equipped for doing that, because I'm used to dealing with the media, I've been able to pick up that skill in the Oils. Media manipulation, too, is very important here. I don't like to use that term too openly, but that's really what it's about. You've got to use it because it's using you and there must be give and take in it. And I think there are a lot of people in the peace movement around the world who just don't understand that. They've tended to see the media as the enemy and that's that. They complain when they don't get the coverage — whereas we go out to create media events. I think people here know that now but in other parts of the world they don't. So it's helpful if you've got that big profile, but I don't think it's necessary, no."

You also mentioned the fact that everyone seems to have a war song or a war slogan or a war t-shirt at the moment. Do you think that kind of pop sloganeering has a great affect, or is it just fashion?

"I think it is having an effect. Because really when you put on a t-shirt that says 'No Nuclear Weapons In My House' or whatever, you are making a statement. It's like listening to a political lyric — whether you're listening to it because you think it's cool or because you want to, it ultimately has a residual effect on you, it lodges in the subconscious somewhere and of course if you're wearing it, everybody else sees it. All these things are cumulative. I think it's a real mistake in terms of assessment of what's going on to apply a levelled, or things-affecting-things view to it. I think that there's so much meshing, cultural, political and personal meshing that in a sense things can come from all directions. So I think anti-nuclear fashion is fantastic, even if sometimes it's just fashion. Because in a sense it's the next step — Boy George and his crowd would never have written songs about this sort of thing five years ago. It's become their reality and so they're writing songs about it. It becomes the reality of the people who buy the record. Even if it only lodges for a second, that's all it takes."

There's a neat aspect to your situation in that you've signed on the line with this great big company CBS, who are currently tolerating you because you're a kind of novelty and ...

"... how long is it going to last we all ask? Wait till they hear the next lot! Ooooh!"

Do you think the company is going to get the wind up?

"Not so long as they can still make money out of me."

Finally, if all goes well and our government holds its stand, what would you hope to have ensued within, say, a year's time, or further ahead?

"Well I would hope that countries like Australia, but even more so the middle powers, the Group Of 21 and others, who quite clearly wish to start moving away from policies which advocate the building, deployment and use of more nuclear weapons will have responded to the New Zealand and that there'll be some kind of foundation which has been laid by New Zealand and we'll be able to start to turn the thing round a little bit. We've got the Non-Proliferation Treaty and some other important events this year and I think that the action, which is a precursor to that, which are very important matters and I think that the action of New Zealand is going to highlight those things. At the same time it's quite clear that the build-up by the Americans shows no sign of stopping. In my view there will be a radical escalation of activity through Europe and America and Australia, direct actions, which will seek to confront and deal with it because people will be as scared as they are now. And New Zealand in a sense will be our model, our role goal. And that's why people here have to really appreciate the great significance and they affect they're having everywhere else and support Mr Lange and the party every strongly. In Europe, East and West and in America, where people have missile silos in their back yards and are surrounded by nuclear weapons, the level of fear is extremely high and now what we're seeing is almost a Nuclear Psychosis overtaking us. And I spend a lot of my time in Australia trying to turn that fear into some kind of action. I think there's action here which turns our fear in Australia and other countries into hope. And that's a very significant change in the human consciousness and perception of things — it's very, very important. You've created, in 1985, a nuclear-free state and that is a big and bright light for the rest of us. I think there'll be strong actions towards that and I hope it keeps burning well. Beyond that, I can't really say. All I know is this movement is on the move, it's rolling, it's growing and it's not going to go away or stop. We can't afford to."

Russell Brown



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