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IN • THE
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Preparing for the holocaust

by Warren Mayne

THERE will be life after the holocaust in New Zealand. The Planning Council says so. But there won't be electricity, telephones, computers or whatever jobs are still left in the freezing works.

Well, you can't have everything. Survival will be enough, assuming that the cretinously crazed warlords of the northern hemisphere play clean (aside from playing nuclear, which is enough dirty pool in itself) and stay put in their own backyards.

If so, we will have David Lange to thank for that, assuming that neither of the nuclear duo perversely decide to send a stray nuke our way just to zap Lange for being a smart Alec.

And the way that our planning councillors spell it out, our survival after the big event will not be comfortable, but it will be just and equitable within the ideological contexts of the present government.

What in essence we will be left with is a country running on the same level of technology and economic development as we had in the year 1900. In short, all of us will be reduced to the state of civilisation and prosperity already prevailing in all those National party seats out there in the provinces.

There will be economic dislocation. Nobody in the northern hemisphere means nobody to eat our lamb and dairy products, so therefore mass unemployment in all our primary industries.

Lord knows, Rogernomics has been working on this blueprint internally for so long that it will appear to most New Zealanders as nothing more than another dollop of the sado-masochistically inflicted pain we have to endure so that our eventual return to our 1973 economic status feels like ultra-erotic pleasure.

We owe a lot to the Iranians and Iraqis who have been working years to give us a foretaste of the marketing problems associated with trying to step up sales to countries that have wiped out each other's populations (or if you prefer precision, each other's target consumer demographics for commodities).

So, we can live with the total absence of northern hemisphere markets for our produce, especially if a charitable southern hemisphere exploited the opportunities to relocate all the millions of leftover radiated mutants still left walking around continental Europe and North America to a safe place — say like the Australian outback.

The other technological problems we would face — loss of electricity, communications and data processing — are not insuperable.

Ever since corporatisation, the responsible SOEs have been working on this one, playing their part in ensuring our post-holocaust preparedness. The Electricity Corporation has been doing its sums, to produce an ideal scenario whereby the price of its product would become beyond the reach of the average consumer.

Telecom similarly has been progressively downgrading the standard of its service to the point that when the telephones don't work 10 times out of 10 that will only be a 10% reduction in service level from that we are already used to.

It will, I admit, be difficult to live without computers, because that will drive forex dealers back to an abacus and smoke signals system. If they light their fires far enough up Mt Cook, they will be able to be seen in Australia, which will be the only other major currency left.

There will be slight drop in the quality of life in a decomputerised society, given that Ruth Richardson will no longer be able to propose video arcades as suitable places of higher learning for those who misplace their vouchers to get into Auckland Grammar.

There will be few home comforts we will miss. I for one will feel a little lost without my morning fix of *Good Morning New Zealand*. But then, I have been keeping an old wind-up gramophone and a pile of old Mantovani records in a safe place for that eventuality.