

Defeated Spirit?

John Zerzan

November 19, 1981

To the Editors:

The latest issue, containing much excellent analysis of our techno-morass and its processes, nonetheless has bothered me.

The absence of a connection between the critique and its use is the most troublesome feature. From the articles I have a persistent sense of the too-remote, the academic; that of a profound indictment minus any everyday applications.

Aside from some very visionary-sounding phrases, the only concrete references to a radical anti-technology approach were calls for “a defense of every little commodity,” which strikes me as merely reformist, and for a “critical sociology,” which could suggest, of course, a retention of specialization of even the university!

To me the technology critique is the first coherent, contemporary attack on no less than every mediation and representation in social life, and therefore exhilarating. But it is not so far for the FE authors: “We are in eclipse; the human spirit is moribund,” says the introduction to the last issue.

This defeated spirit tends to inform the paper, and renders the goal of liberation an impossible (or even cynical) idea to the “Paleolithic Liberation Organization” which produces it. The depth of misery is laid out for all to see—only there’s really zero hope for breaking what we can so clearly understand. Thus, the critique remains a banality: everyone can know it and no one can win. Perfect example is quoting Jacques Ellul at great length—Ellul who is equally known as *lay Catholic theologian* as for his (trenchant) ideas about the “Technological Society.”

As the situationists used to counsel, “Nihilists! One more effort if you would be revolutionaries.”

**Not in eclipse,
not even close,
John Zerzan
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