

Some say that Straight Edge died.  
Nah, we've just been busy.  
With the cover of night, we make  
a different kind of music – the kind  
that sounds like locks breaking,  
windows shattering, and fire engines  
racing to whatever we leave behind.  
Our scene is no longer confined to basements and venue halls.  
We're in tear-gas filled streets. We're scamming your businesses.  
We're in your backyard liberating animals while you sleep...  
We echo the howls of generations of youth who around the  
globe refused to be chemically tranquilized – the punks who'd  
rather light up a molotov cocktail than a joint.



Warzone Distro  
WARZONEDISTRO.NOBLOGS.ORG  
2025



## Out of Step With the World

### *Exploring Straight Edge as Anarchist Praxis*



From an anarchist perspective, intoxication remains a source of contention. Many radical anti-capitalist anti-statists remain unaware of the ways intoxicants, stimulants, and depressants have been deployed by ruling classes throughout history as mechanisms for diminishing the self-defense capacities of industrial and agricultural workers, peasants, and slaves. Sadly, many radicals – especially in the USA – see the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs as an authentic and valuable aspect of working class (but not necessarily oppositional) culture. From an individualist perspective, the issue is further fraught with contention due to the peer pressure and unspoken assumptions of subcultural conformism that inhere in their consumption. - From “Confronting A Silent Assassin: Intoxication Culture in Resistance Movements”

### **Youth liberation!**

To begin discussing the origins of what would eventually become known as the Straight Edge movement, it is necessary to understand youth liberation - not only as an energetic tendency found within anti-authoritarian discourse but as a catalyst for individual resistance to social pressure and expectation.

Generally speaking, young people aren’t only subjected to the hyper-glorification and pressures of intoxication culture at home and all around them, but are also themselves the primary targets of the alcohol and tobacco industry. For the capitalists whose entire market is driven by normalizing intoxication culture, creating addiction and chemical-dependency at a young age means securing lifelong profit. To the alcohol and tobacco industry, the youth are next in line as consumers - a new generation of profit. It isn’t a coincidence that one’s entrance into adulthood is often celebrated with drinking – an example of how intoxication culture benefits from a child/adult hierarchy. The freedom to get wasted - viewed as a form of consumer autonomy – is connected to the reality of adults having been granted special purchasing privileges to legally drink and smoke. With the help of societal pressures and advertisement, the alcohol and tobacco industry relies on the rebellious ambition of the youth who will find clever ways to illegally obtain and consume alcohol and tobacco products, creating chemical-dependency without ever having to sell to the youth directly.

But whether legal or not, not all youth *want* to drink or smoke. Contrary to what many believe, the Straight Edge movement never began as a *movement* at all; “straight edge” was originally intended as a derogatory name created by drunk punks who mocked the idea of a drug-free life. This mockery was in response to what they viewed as a growing tension within the music scene. They weren’t wrong. A confrontational response to intoxication within hardcore punk was in fact happening - long before it even claimed a name for itself. And these “straight edge” punks weren’t just asserting their rebellion against drugs and

norms of intoxication culture can benefit from examining how industrial civilization itself is designed to possess and govern the mind and body toward its own reproduction. The relationship between the individual and industrial civilization constitutes a toxic dependency carefully designed to deplete the body and mind of energy with the never-ending demand of one’s time and labor. The misery created by wage-slavery serves as both a motivation for product demand, and also a vehicle of monetary accessibility for the products of both intoxication culture and whatever popular technology-based consumerism trending at the time.

Anarchist theory that extends solidarity to include those struggling against intoxication culture necessarily includes an exploration into understanding how smoking, drug use, and the consumption of alcohol play a major role in collectively maintaining colonization and perpetuating its project of chemical warfare. Straight Edge that includes anarchist praxis can be understood as individual revolt against industrial society, and its deliberate colonial strategy of using addiction of any and all forms to maintain the subordination of a population of people, starting with the individual.

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### **Support Info for the Susaron 4**

Write an email specifying who you are sending it to

Solidaridad.antiespecista4@gmail.com

Solidaridad.antiespecista4@autistici.org

Their communal PayPal is Solidaridad.antiespecista4@gmail.com

Vicente Jauffret

/solidaridaadantiespec

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### **For those who enjoy statistics: Every dollar counts...**

-The alcoholic beverages market was valued at **\$2,313.2 billion in 2023** and is projected to grow from \$2,527.0 billion in 2024 to \$5,716.2 billion by 2032

- The U.S. tobacco market was estimated at **\$75.9 billion in 2021** and is expected to reach \$78.3 billion in 2022. The U.S. tobacco market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 3.4% from 2022 to 2030 to reach \$102.7 billion by 2030

-The global cannabis market was valued at \$43.72 billion in 2022 and is projected to grow from \$57.18 billion in 2023 to **\$444.34 billion by 2030**

-With estimates of \$100 billion to \$110 billion for heroin, \$110 billion to \$130 billion for cocaine, \$75 billion for cannabis and \$60 billion for synthetic drugs, the probable global figure for the total illicit drug industry would be approximately \$360 billion

commonly found discarded on streets. This means that they get mixed in with other ground debris, eventually breaking down into microplastics and chemicals that flow into storm drains to pollute waterways and wildlife. More serious of an environmental threat than cigarette butts, E-cigarettes contains metal, circuitry, disposable plastic cartridges, batteries, and toxic chemicals in e-liquids. Both the batteries and e-cigarette devices themselves contain lead and mercury. Currently, there are only two ways to safely dispose of e-cigarette cartridges: one way is to return them to the e-cigarette manufacturers themselves (or the vendors) for recycling. Another way is rinsing them under running water to remove nicotine residues, and then wrap in a scrap of biodegradable material, to discard as a plastic waste.

In the arena of socio-political economics, intoxication culture financially empowers narco-states and warfare across the globe. In a market where the net worth of a person's life is measured by how addicted they are to a product, drug dealers are financially motivated to create increasingly addictive products. Unlike public or private capitalist enterprises, grey and black market drug activities constitute a political economy of its own based on international trafficking. Intoxication culture doesn't just exist in a vacuum; capital made from alcohol, nicotine, and drug sales all contribute to increased levels of political corruption and power, maintaining levels of violence, exploitation, and domination wherever governments and/or narco-states see fit.

### **Straight Edge as Anarchist Praxis**

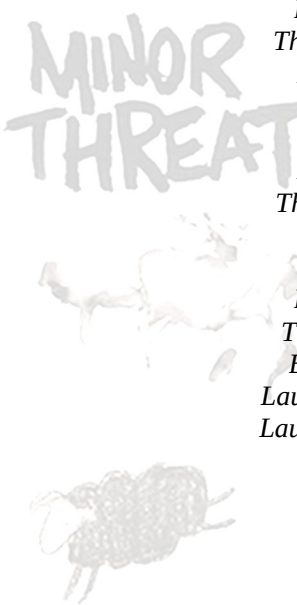
On September 18, 2022, four vegan, straight edge anarchists entered the main branch of Susaron and set fire to the trucks that were on the premises. As a result of the spread of the fire, the meat packing plant and the sales room were also burned. A couple months later they were arrested and charged with arson, two of them for possession of ammunition.

Just as anarchists have been fighting back against capitalism, the State, and industrial society, the Straight Edge punks of the 80's - and present - have been fighting back against one of the most well-known, longest-used weapons of mass destruction: Intoxication culture continues its destructive dominion today in every corner of industrial society. The amount of harm that alcohol (and more recently, fentanyl and meth) continues to inflict upon indigenous people throughout the colonized world is a reminder of why for some, Straight Edge is considered a valuable counterattack. From the Opium Wars which were essential to British colonial strategy, to the flooding of every ghetto with drugs (especially heroin) in the wake of the 1960s revolt for civil rights, industrial civilization requires people to remain docile and defeated.

Straight Edge as a lifestyle that asserts total negation against the values and

alcohol in the scene, they were also placing the crosshairs of contempt on the capitalist industries responsible for creating the products in the first place.

Along with those who profited from drug sales on the street, the alcohol and tobacco industry had a problem. While their propaganda was designed to channel youthful rebellion into a consumerist activity of underage drinking and smoking, some young punks had a different message:



*"I'm a person just like you  
But I've got better things to do  
Than sit around and fuck my head  
Hang out with the living dead  
Snort white shit up my nose  
Pass out at the shows  
I don't even think about speed  
That's something I just don't need  
I've gone straight edge!  
I'm a person just like you  
But I've got better things to do  
Than sit around and smoke dope  
Because I know that I can cope  
Laugh at the thought of eating ludes  
Laugh at the thought of sniffing glue  
Always gonna keep in touch  
Never want to use a crutch  
I've got straight edge!  
I've got straight edge!  
I've got straight edge!  
I've got straight edge!"*

- "Straight Edge" by Minor Threat

### **X-ing up?**

Similar to other revolutionary causes that use symbolism – the Black Panther fist, the anarchist 'circle A', the anti-fascist arrows etc. - the straight edge youth had their symbol as well: An X, which was typically worn on the back of both hands. An X is also sometimes placed on either side of a name (as in some band names or online screen names) to express that the person is straight edge.

It is important to note that the practice of X-ing up predates the term "Straight Edge". There are slightly varying stories on exactly how the letter X became the most well-known symbol of the straight edge scene. The most consistent story can be traced back to a band called Teen Idles. The story goes that during a tour on the west coast in 1980, Teen Idles was scheduled to play at San Francisco's Mabuhay Gardens, but when they arrived, the club manager discovered that they



were all under the legal drinking age and would be denied entry to the club. After some convincing by the band, the manager decided to mark each of the members' hands with a large black X as a warning to the club's staff not to serve alcohol to the band.

When the band returned to Washington, D.C., the band suggested this same idea to local venues as a way to create accessibility for young punks who wanted to see bands despite the establishment serving alcohol. This was helpful in reducing the number of “18 and over” policies at venues. The Teen Idles released a record in 1980 called *Minor Disturbance*. The cover shot was two hands with black Xs on the back. But soon being X'ed up came with being bullied. Being X'ed up was an easy giveaway for one's status as a minor amongst a crowd of older punks. In response to this, some underage punks began coming to shows already X'ed up, defiant against the bullying and alcohol in the scene. Over time, the youth stopped being the only ones wearing Xs on their hands. Older punks who also resented alcohol - as well as the bullying of minors - began wearing X's, signifying their solidarity with them. With the help of the *Minor Disturbance* EP, The Teen Idles not only marked the debut release of Dischord Records - an influential hardcore punk label founded by members of the band - but also solidified the association of X symbols with a drug-free lifestyle.

Formed in 1979, The Teen Idles consisted of high school classmates Ian MacKaye (bass), Nathan Strejcek (vocals), Geordie Grindle (guitar), and Jeff Nelson (drums). During their rather short existence from 1979 to 1980, the band performed numerous shows in the DC area. The Teen Idles disbanded in late 1980 due to personal tensions arising from conflicting religious beliefs between the Christian Grindle and the atheist Nelson. This led to a split, with Nelson and MacKaye forming the band *Minor Threat*.

In 1981, *Minor Threat* released their debut EP, featuring the track “Straight Edge,” which gave the emerging movement its name.

According to Ian MacKaye, The Teen Idles' song “I Drink Milk” from their EP was the first-ever straight edge song, which often subjected him to ridicule within the early hardcore punk scene. This ridicule and opposition encouraged his later band, *Minor Threat*, to create the more confrontational and straight-forward song “Straight Edge.”

### **Youth Crew**

Beginning as a fiery reaction by youth who refused to surrender themselves to the social pressure to get ‘fucked up’, Straight Edge punks formed small affinities or “crews” which would eventually become known as “Youth Crews”.

people have is the freedom to legally drink themselves into liver failure or smoke themselves into a cancerous downward spiral.

For many Straight Edge individuals who have recovered from a history of addiction, declaring oneself Straight Edge not only disrupts one's own personalized cycle of self-destruction, but challenges the framing that self-intoxication is a personal freedom, rather than a trauma-based symbiotic relationship between an individual and industrial civilization – a civilization that functions best when one's ambition toward rebellion is distracted by chemical impairment.

While it is true that at the end of the day - at least for those of us who are anarchists – it's no one's choice but our own to decide what chemicals to put in our bodies, one's decision to consume alcohol, smoke, or do drugs nevertheless contribute to a larger civilizing project that impacts *everyone*.

### **Industrial Civilization: The Opiate of the Masses**

From an anti-civ perspective, intoxication culture - as a collection of social activities encouraged and financed by capitalism (and sometimes the State) - is an ecologically destructive problem that often goes unexamined by even the most passionate environmentalists. For example, alcohol production is an energy-intensive process, from farming to bottling, requiring significant quantities of water. Wine production alone generates large quantities of wastewater contaminated with organic material from grapes, cleaning and disinfection products, and products used for wine treatment. This causes significant environmental harm, with polluted soil and waterways. In general, the production of alcohol necessitates the removal of woodlands in order to create alcohol-producing plants, building and maintaining production equipment, storage machinery and units. In addition fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals are required in production along with packaging, labels, electricity, fuels, transportation costs, and waste management. Despite people around the globe facing droughts and inaccessibility to clean drinking water, clean drinking water is used every single day in massive quantities in order to produce a mere consumer commodity.

"Every year the tobacco industry costs the world more than 8 million human lives, 600 million trees, 200,000 hectares of land, 22 billion tonnes of water and 84 million tonnes of CO2." - World Health Organization, 'WHO raises alarm on tobacco industry environmental impact', 2022

Today one of the most popular vices is the E-cigarette. Unlike cigarette butts, e-cigarette waste isn't biodegradable. In addition, E-cigarette cartridges are

In a sociological sense, intoxication culture acts as an authority over the mind and body. Similar to when referring to the mental and physical effects of life-long wage-slavery, the normalization of intoxication culture leads to the perception of total sobriety as unusual, impractical, or unreasonable. Joblessness is often viewed in a similar way. As with wage-slavery, the mental and physical breakdown of the body are generally viewed as an acceptable consequence of one's participation in a culture of glorified intoxication. Work-related health problems due to, for example, long-term repetitive motion are widely known, but generally accepted as normal. Another example of how intoxication culture influences what is or isn't considered "normal" through its authority is how binary gender norms such as masculinity is associated with hard liquor and femininity associated with "light-weight" alcoholic beverages like wine or mixed drinks. This also relates to how certain bodily responses to alcohol are perceived as an indication of personal weakness - being able to 'handle your liquor' is seen as more manly.

The culture around smoking also has a gender-essentialist narrative of masculinity where certain bodily responses to cigarettes (such as coughing or vomiting) are perceived as "unmanly" or "uncool". The less reaction one's body has to drinking, smoking, or using drugs, the more celebrated they are within the culture. Those who defiantly resist the peer pressure to consume alcohol, tobacco, or recreational drugs are subject to ridicule or name-calling. A similar attitude can be seen among people with jobs toward those who don't.

Another problem with the authority assumed by intoxication culture is how getting "fucked up" becomes the arbiter of defining personal freedom. A major part of this perception was produced by America's "War on Drugs" campaign. While State intervention is always an infringement on personal freedom, the motives behind such intervention was the furthest thing from saving lives or ethical. But naturally in response to this campaign, many people felt they had to defend their right to get high. Those who maintain a co-dependent relationship with intoxication culture and lash out against Straight Edge individuals out of defensiveness quite often recycle the same misconceptions and negative stereotypes about Straight Edge without making an effort to examine things further. From a Straight Edge anarchist perspective, the "right" to get high is never in question. There is, however, a desire to examine the potential underlying reasons why people want to get high in the first place. While reasons for wanting to get high or participate in intoxication culture will vary from person to person, it would be naive at best to view the matter of personal intoxication as purely an isolated individual choice, devoid of any external influences that, for example, relate to over 523 years of domesticated trauma and domination. Would it really be unreasonable for one to see a possible connection between the freedom to intoxicate and the State's desire to chemically disempower a population of people in order to neutralize any rebellious potential? Within the prison of industrial society, the only real power

As more Youth Crews formed, a subculture began to emerge out of step with everyone else. This subculture loudly made itself known in the New York hardcore punk scene in the late 1980s. As a subculture, Youth Crew distinguished itself from other styles of punk with an outlook that centered self-empowerment and positivity in contrast to the self-destructive negativity found in most of hardcore punk. Youth Crew bands formed as Straight Edge gained momentum as a lifestyle of rebellion. Their style of music was aggressive, fast-paced, and with lyrics that not only encouraged mind and body positivity, but also encouraged the dismantling of intoxication culture within and beyond the scene.

*Me, you, youth crew*

*Me, you, youth crew*

*If the world was flat I'd grind the edge*

*To the positive youth my heart I pledge (I pledge my heart)*

*X on my hand now take the oath*

*To positive youth, to positive growth*

*Me, you, youth crew*

*Me, you, youth crew*

*To positive minds, to pure clean souls*

*These will be all my goals*

*Walk with me and my crew*

*There is so much shit we can do*

*And we won't stop until we're through*

*Me, you, youth crew*

*Me, you, youth crew*

*Me, you, youth crew*

- "Youth Crew" by Youth of Today

These lyrics - along with the fast-paced energy and frustration expressed with the music itself - brought the problems of intoxication culture to the surface, unifying every youth who chose sobriety as a personal act of revolt.

Over the next few years, the Youth Crew subculture rapidly expanded. John L. Hancock III (aka RatBoy) wrote the Youth of Today song "Youth Crew" which appeared on their 1985 *Can't Close My Eyes 7"*. A band called 7 Seconds named their debut LP record *The Crew* in 1984, which also contained the song "The Crew". Some other examples of this expanding subculture were Boston Straight Edge bands like SS Decontrol, Negative FX, DYS, and other participants in the local subculture calling themselves the "Boston Crew". Bands and individuals in the Reno area (most notably 7 Seconds) similarly referred to themselves as the "Skeeno Crew". Another Straight Edge youth crew band by the name of Judge also released a song called "New York Crew" in 1988.

Youth Crew continued to gain momentum, exploding in the years between 1986 to 1992, primarily in New York City tri-state region and, to a lesser degree, California.

### **Straight Edge: Individual Revolt, Global Impact**

For many, Straight Edge describes a relationship with one's mind and body that asserts a personal boundary against intoxication culture – a culture of social norms and values that celebrate and normalize drinking, smoking, and using drugs. But even in its most passive form, the decision to embrace a Straight Edge life is nevertheless an act of revolt. Since intoxication culture maintains a dominant and imposing presence in society – everything from social pressure campaigns and marketing advertisements, to occupying physical space with liquor stores and bars – simply *existing* in society as a Straight Edge individual often creates tension that challenges norms and lifeways that revolve around intoxication culture.

Since its origins within the punk scene, the Straight Edge milieu has expanded far and wide politically and geographically. Straight Edge has become a utilitarian weapon of choice for many who view intoxication culture as a problem beyond just music.

There has always been youth who have resisted drugs, alcohol, and smoking long before Straight Edge or hardcore punk subcultures. In addition to resisting intoxication culture in the music scene comes the question of where intoxication culture itself began, and how it negatively affects life in general. These questions, asked by those with an appetite for locating the root of a problem, inevitably leads to tracing back the origins of getting wasted, bringing into question government, capitalism, and even industrial civilization itself. This exploration uncovers other interesting and hidden instances of resistance to intoxication – reminding us that the birth of Straight Edge wasn't just an isolated occurrence.

Modern capitalism was, of course, built in part to facilitate the international trade in tobacco and other commodities produced on European-owned slave plantations in the New World. Jamestown, the first British colony in North America, produced almost nothing but tobacco (going so far as to use it as currency at one point), and the various colonies that sprung up soon after in the Carolinas followed a similar tobacco-intensive model, enriching their investors at the expense of slaves, indentured servants, indigenous people, and the land. The large sums of money that could be made in tobacco production led the British colonists to declare open-ended war on the indigenous people that occupied the lands around them, beginning a process of theft and murder that would go on to become one of the most horrific genocides in human history. -

inflammation, stomach lining irritation, dehydration (due to alcohol's nature as a diuretic), and hypoglycemia (since alcohol interferes with the body's ability to regulate blood sugar) all work together to cause nausea, stomach pains, shakiness, fatigue, headaches, and malaise.

Over a longer period, habitual and heavy alcohol use can affect nearly every part of the body. The brain can suffer permanent damage, and an increased risk of both hemorrhagic and ischemic stroke. The heart is subject to cardiomyopathy (a weakened muscle), arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat), hypertension (high blood pressure, and an increased risk of heart attack or stroke. The pancreas is at an increased risk of pancreatitis, the gastrointestinal tract can develop leaky gut or colorectal cancer, the bones can become less dense, and the liver - our most ardent defender in this fight - is at risk of steatosis (fatty liver), alcoholic hepatitis, fibrosis, cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

When a person smokes a cigarette, there are almost immediate effects. The heat and chemicals cause the lining of the nose, esophagus, and lungs to become irritated and inflamed - an attempt by the body to protect itself from damage. The carbon monoxide produced by cigarettes binds to the hemoglobin in one's blood more readily than oxygen, leading to decreased lung function as well as often causing headaches, dizziness, and nausea. The decreased oxygen flow can contribute to organ damage over time, particularly in the heart, brain, and kidneys, as well as impairing the body's ability to heal itself from wounds and injuries and making physical activity more difficult. This same decreased oxygen flow also damages collagen and elastin in one's skin, leading to increased wrinkles, and also inhibits one's sense of smell, taste, and hearing.

Smoking kills the beneficial bacteria in one's mouth and stomach, inflames the salivary glands, and reduces blood flow to the mouth, reducing the body's ability to produce saliva. This causes dry mouth and bad breath, as well as paving the way for cavities, oral infections, and diseases. Over time, nicotine discolors the teeth, gums, and nails where it makes contact. Nicotine and other chemicals in cigarettes trigger an inflammatory response in the body, causing them to constrict and damage the blood vessels. This elevates the blood pressure and contributes to hypertension, (leading to poor circulation, leg cramps, and numbness) as well as contributing to atherosclerosis (plaque buildup and hardening within the blood vessels). Additionally, nicotine affects the blood's ability to clot, making it more 'sticky' and increasing the risk of clots. The carbon monoxide and nicotine increase the production of platelets, further increasing the blood's tendency to clot.

Over time, all of these factors contribute to an increased risk of heart attack, stroke, deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot in the legs), or pulmonary embolism (a blood clot that travels to the lungs).

On the surface, these are just labels. What gives these labels any meaning at all are the actions taken by those who use them to express rebellion as a day-to-day activity. From an anarchist perspective, a Straight Edge lifestyle is the lived experience of transforming one's relationship to an intoxication-obsessed society from conformity to total negation.

Within industrial society, the power and normativity of addiction and substance use is so strong that it's common for people to express feeling like they could never imagine themselves as Straight Edge or totally sober. Many people view Straight Edge as either a personal impossibility or some sort of religious extreme. What often gets left out of these conversations are the many ways in which intoxication culture destroys the body with silent but deadly precision. While those who profit from intoxication culture spend millions on ad campaigns in order to put a positive spin on drinking and smoking, a war is waged against the mind and body.

When a person consumes alcohol, their body attempts to defend itself against the toxicity at every turn.

The body is unable to digest alcohol in the way it digests food. Instead, the alcohol is absorbed from the stomach and small intestine into the bloodstream, allowing it to pass to every part of the body. At low levels or in the first stages, its effects are seen most prominently in the brain; slowed reaction times, diminished motor skills, and impaired judgement. Alongside the effects on the brain, alcohol widens the blood vessels, often creating a blushing skin color and temporary feeling of warmth, despite causing the body's temperature to drop. Alcohol also initially causes the blood pressure to drop.

Over the course of a session of drinking, the effects on the brain become more pronounced - the diminished motor skills and impaired judgement increase, as well as causing confusion and memory loss. The alcohol acts as a central nervous system depressant, often causing drowsiness and fatigue. The effects on the body become more severe as well, as the blood pressure rebounds from its initial drop and becomes elevated.

The liver works hard to metabolize the alcohol into acetaldehyde, a carcinogenic intermediary product, which is then converted into acetate, which is excreted in the urine. This is a labor-intensive process for the liver, which can only process one drink per hour (equivalent to .6 ounces of pure alcohol, or: one 12 oz beer, one 5 oz glass of wine, one 1.5 oz shot glass of distilled spirits). For a moderate to heavy drinking session, this may mean that the bloodstream still contains alcohol the morning or afternoon after. In order to manage this overload of toxins, the liver may attempt to evacuate the body through vomiting.

The next day, the negative effects become more apparent. Acetaldehyde toxicity,

Quote from the zine "Quit Smoking: A DIY Guide by Ex-Smokers"

### **A Brief (and Incomplete) History of How Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Were Used as Tools Toward Industrial Colonization and Social Control**

Addiction – whether to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco – is complex despite almost always being viewed as merely the result of bad personal choices made by the individual affected. There are several contributing factors to making the decision to drink, smoke, or use drugs that often get left out of the picture. For example, intoxication culture has a social pressure of its own that's imposed upon all people – a social pressure driven by a profit motive. On one hand are capitalists who – whether street dealers, liquor store and bar owners, or multi-billion dollar alcohol and tobacco corporations – stand to make profit from addiction. On the other hand is a prison-industrial complex that makes a profit from the criminalization of drug users and dealers by using incarceration as an opportunity to gain cheap labor from them. This labor involves the manufacturing of products for other corporations like Target, Walmart, McDonalds, and so on, for only pennies on the dollar.

Despite public relations campaigns like the well-known but highly criticized "War on Drugs", capitalism and the State are, by design, ill-equipped to solve the problem of addiction among the population, since addiction itself and its criminalization are not only profitable but also beneficial in a variety of ways for those in positions of hierarchical power.

Drug-related interrogation techniques and experimentation conducted by the US government began in 1943 as a continuation of the Nazi experiments conducted by Nazi scientists in the Auschwitz and Dachau concentration camps. Nazi scientists used substances such as barbiturates, morphine derivatives, and hallucinogens such as mescaline in experiments conducted on Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish people, as well as disabled people, gay and gender nonconforming people, and others while incarcerated as prisoners of war. The purpose of this experimentation was to develop a "truth drug" that would produce "uninhibited truthfulness" in an interrogated person. In 1947, the United States Navy began Project CHATTER, an interrogation program which became the first to test LSD on human subjects.

In 1950, a series of interrogation projects involving human subjects sprung up, beginning with the launch of Project Bluebird, officially renamed Project Artichoke on August 20, 1951. The objective of Project Artichoke was to determine whether an individual could be made to involuntarily perform an act of attempted assassination. Various drugs including Morphine, Mescaline, and LSD were all administered on unknowing CIA agents in an attempt to produce amnesia.



In 1953, *MKUltra* was created as a human experimentation program designed and utilized by the US government, with the aim of developing procedures and identifying drugs that could be used during interrogations to weaken individuals and force confessions. The brainwashing and psychological torture foundational to this program have been two of the many reasons why it is widely condemned as a violation of individual rights and often referenced as an example of the CIA's abuse of power.

Project MKUltra was revealed to the public in 1975. While investigative efforts were hampered by CIA Director Richard Helms's order that all MKUltra files be destroyed in 1973, a Freedom of Information Act request filed in 1977 uncovered a cache of 20,000 documents relating to MKUltra. Some surviving information about MKUltra was declassified in 2001, revealing more of the extent to which the project studied the effects of psychoactive drugs, specifically LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, cocaine, AMT, and DMT on people.

Another example of drugs being strategically used against people is the CIA flooding marginalized communities with drugs in order to disrupt revolutionary organizing and maintain social power and control.

Over the past several years, there has emerged mounting evidence that suggests a connection between the CIA and the introduction of crack cocaine into black neighborhoods with drug profits used to fund CIA-backed anti-communist projects in the early 1980s. This same evidence has given credit to many long-held suspicions of the US government's role in not only impoverishing black communities, but also disrupting revolutionary organizing domestic and abroad. This evidence includes the exposure of a San Francisco Bay Area drug ring, comprised of CIA and American DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) agents and informants, which sold large amounts of cocaine to the Crips and Bloods street gangs of Los Angeles. The millions of dollars in drug profits were then channeled to the Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense (Nicaraguan Democratic Force), the largest of several anti-communist organizations based in South America commonly called "Contras". The 5,000-man FDN was created in mid-1981 and run by both American and Nicaraguan CIA agents with the task of increasing instability in many areas of South America, leading to an increase in American military intervention. Opium grown in Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand was connected to the Vietnam War, just as the more contemporary increase in opium production in Afghanistan is an intimate aspect of the American occupation.

Over time, the cocaine that flooded Los Angeles, largely provided by or filtered through the state, created a crack epidemic in urban America and provided the cash and connections needed for Los Angeles' gangs to buy high-powered assault weapons that would fuel deadly gang turf wars, drive-by shootings, and robberies.

In a conversation between Warzone Distro and anarchists from the colonized territory known as Chile, the relationship between Straight Edge and anarchy was discussed:

**Warzone Distro:** *We are always interested to hear perspectives critical of intoxication culture from other colonized territories. Could you please share with us some of your personal stories related to why you embraced a straight edge lifestyle as part of your anarchist practice?*

**Anarchists:** *Regarding the straight edge concept; we have always seen as essential the care of our body as a temple and as a channel of direct confrontation. And likewise refusing the brutal control exercised by the state and its tentacles through drugs. Ruining entire generations of rebels because of it. And it does not fit in our concept of opposition to all exploitation and apparatus of domination, that by our own complacency and mental weakness we are subjugated through substances made to appease the discontent and collapse. And as anarchic-nihilists we understand our body and mind as the only thing we own and our main weapon...*

*... This common experience shared by many anarchists has been one of the elements that has marked our perspective on being straight edge and why. As well as, and not least, the fact that many generations of young insurrectionists have been lost in the mental and physical deterioration generated by the web of drugs and their slow and camouflaged intrusion into the lives of those who begin to consume them, especially individuals prone to depression. This dramatically undermines the power of resistance movements that require people committed and prepared for the challenges involved in fighting such a giant and finely tuned machine as the reigning structure of domination."*

### **No Gods, No Masters, No Substances.**

A common misunderstanding among some non-straight edge anarchists is the perception of Straight Edge individuals as pushy purists who seek to impose their values upon all others. This perception is based on a misunderstanding of Straight Edge as a coercive law rather than a celebration of self-ownership. There is no inherent moral value or righteousness to being Straight Edge, and there are no natural laws against drinking, smoking, or doing drugs. Any implication of Straight Edge being associated with this type of authoritarian god-complex comes from those who simply confuse self-liberation with totalitarian and religious schools of thought. Identifying one's self as Straight Edge is no different than self-identifying as vegan or anarchist or anti-fascist.



whom I found discussion a pleasure, for they showed me not utopias but things which one could see and touch. Moreover, these individuals were quite sober. When I discussed with them, I didn't need, as was the case amongst the great mass of barbarians, to turn my head away as they chatted to me, for their mouths didn't reek of alcohol or tobacco. I found them to be fair, and encountered amongst them great energy and strength of view.

My views were soon set, I became one of them. No longer did I want to go and work for someone else, I wanted to work for myself, although as to how, I didn't have much choice. But, having acquired some experience, and full of energy, I resolved to defend myself to the death against the stupid mass and the iniquity of present Society." - Octave Garnier, twenty year-old sober anarchist and draft-dodger who was to become one of the prime founders of the 1911 French illegalist anarchist crew 'The Bonnot Gang'.

French anarchists of the early 1900's known as illegalists viewed sobriety as an integral part of their anarchist lifestyle, preferring water over tea and coffee and rejecting alcohol vehemently. These anarchists felt that alcohol "dulled the senses of workers to their exploitation" and was "therefore another weapon in the arsenal of capitalism". For these individualist anarchists, alcoholism was, as author Richard Parry describes, "a sort of materialized form of the Christian-induced attitude of resignation."

An anarchist by the name of Libertad and his two lovers, founded an anarchist-individualist weekly journal called *l'anarchie* which first appeared on 13th April 1905, and continued to appear every Thursday, without interruption, until it was suppressed with all the other revolutionary papers at the outbreak of war in 1914. *L'anarchie* declared itself against resignation and conformity to the existing state of affairs, and particularly opposed vices, habits, and prejudices such as work, marriage, military service, voting, smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol, and the eating of meat. Its purpose was to encourage 'individual regeneration' and the 'revolution of the self'.

For many straight edge anarchists, the personal refusal to participate in drinking, smoking, and using drugs has an insurrectionary significance beyond just practicality – a life of personal negation, a refusal to surrender ownership of one's mind and body to authority – including that of the controlling power of addictive substances. For some anarchists, Straight Edge is a statement about the power in taking control and full ownership of a one's life. In this sense, Straight Edge is an anarchist praxis - a Do-It-Yourself ethic - where creating one's own pleasure, healing, and stress relief is done in ways that don't depend on those who profit from turning people into addicts.

But this wasn't by any means the *first* time drugs and other chemical substances were used in pursuit of control and domination over a mass population. Throughout history, European colonizers new to the land that would eventually become know as the "United States" sowed the seeds for the development of a normative, societal intoxication culture, especially within the Turtle Island indigenous population.

### Intoxication Culture as a Colonizing Force Against Natives

"Alcohol was an integral part of the colonization process. Everything from creating alcoholic abusive behavior within what used to be peaceful Native groups and tribes to pacifying slave revolts. European Christian colonists used alcohol and other drugs as a chemical weapon of warfare in their genocidal and ethnic cleansing, mistreatment, and exploitation of indigenous peoples. Alcohol, marijuana and tobacco became tools of privilege creating hierarchy as those who had more access to these could sell them for the labor of others. Once tobacco became known for its profit, indigenous people, slaves, and indentured servants were put to work on lands that were taken by brutal force from the Natives. Alcohol and drugs were used for their pacifying and numbing effects. As the wild and free became more intoxicated and distracted from the reality of their rapidly changing existence, they began to internalize the hatred imposed upon them. With the development of an identity crisis the process of assimilation took place as many indigenous and other people of color became a target for capitalists who profit from social intoxication. And now the masses are pacified with marijuana, who are demanding a reform and it to be legalized, putting it in the hands of the oppressors as a controlled substance, another means of control taxing the consumers and using the funds for governmental power! By impairing and debilitating the emotional and physical arsenal foundational to self-liberation, intoxication culture is an obstacle in the way of revolutionary organizing and attack. The revolutionary act of overcoming these obstacles and addictions in pursuit of self-liberation is nothing less than an outspoken refusal to be tamed and pacified. It is a refusal to promote and participate in a culture which aids the destruction of others." -Kerry Redwood Atjecoutay

Prior to European colonization, indigenous people living on this territory known today as the 'United States' were relatively unfamiliar with the habitual use of - and long-term effects from - alcohol consumption. Some tribes produced weak fermented beverages, that were generally only used for ceremonial purposes. The distillation of stronger (and therefore more addictive) forms of alcohol was unknown. When various European colonists made large amounts of strong

alcoholic beverages suddenly available to indigenous people, tribes had little time to develop social, legal, or even spiritual guidelines to regulate alcohol consumption. Colonizers who traded with indigenous people quickly created a high demand for alcohol by introducing it as a medium of trade, often in exchange for highly sought-after animal skins and other resources.

Not all indigenous people were susceptible to the temptations of alcohol. Rather than approval, most indigenous people initially responded to alcohol with distaste and suspicion. They considered drunkenness "degrading to free men" and questioned the motives of those who would offer a substance that was so offensive to the senses and that made their people act foolish. Nevertheless, European traders encouraged alcohol consumption among the natives, often providing it for free during trading sessions, which gave them a distinct advantage in their negotiations.

In 1753, Benjamin Franklin witnessed a drunken brawl in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, after providing rum to a party of Iroquois in exchange for their cooperation during treaty discussions, and wrote in his autobiography:

[They] are extremely apt to get drunk, and when so are very quarrelsome & disorderly ... indeed if it be the Design of Providence to extirpate these Savages in order to make room for Cultivators of the Earth, it seems not improbable that Rum may be the appointed Means. It has already annihilated all the Tribes who formerly inhabited the Sea-coast.

Following the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, large numbers of indigenous people were violently forced to relocate to designated lands west of the Mississippi River. This created concentrated populations of displaced, demoralized, and heavily traumatized natives who frequently resettled in desolate, barren country without vegetation. In this impoverished environment the demand for alcohol was high, and white businessmen quickly discovered that bison hunters would trade hides for alcohol at a fraction of their commercial value. Hundreds of new businesses were established to take advantage of the growing market for buffalo hide which was used for machinery belts, army boots, robes, rugs and so on. As a direct result of increased alcoholism, animal cruelty and slaughter became more common as animals were viewed less as autonomous, living beings and more as material objects valuable for trade in exchange for alcohol.

The Sauk warrior Black Hawk, (1767-1838), wrote in his autobiography of the mistreatment of his people due to alcohol:

"The white people brought whisky to our village, made our people

being exclusively associated with poor, black, brown, and indigenous people, any number or type of traumatic event can lead *anyone* to addiction. As a direct result of the prevalent, racist associations circulated about people of color and intoxication culture, white people struggling with substance use and addiction find themselves not only subjected to race-based ridicule by their peers, but to the social pressure of meeting higher societal expectations. This in turn exacerbates the original stress and frustration behind using drugs, alcoholism, or nicotine addiction in the first place.

Those struggling against social and institutionalized forms of patriarchy, homophobia, queerphobia, and transphobia are also the target of capitalists looking to chemically profit from misery.

Queer and trans communities struggle with astronomically high rates of alcoholism, due both to an attempt to escape the pressure of hiding their sexuality from family, friends, and society, and due to the emphasis on alcohol as a form of recreation throughout mainstream queer culture. Beer companies are among the largest sponsors of "Pride" celebrations and advertise extensively in queer publications; in most areas of the US, the primary social spaces for queer-friendly (or even queer-safe) interaction are bars whose primary function is selling intoxication. One of the first specifically gay and lesbian organizations in many towns is a chapter of Alcoholic Anonymous. Substance abuse rates among queers are also severe, as untold numbers of ravers and club queens burn out on cocaine, crystal meth, ecstasy, and other substances. The epidemics of AIDS and other STDs continue, in spite of the incredible efforts of educators and activists throughout the country, largely because of risky sex while intoxicated. For sober queers, virtually no physical or social space exists. - From the zine Towards a Less Fucked Up World: Sobriety and Anarchist Struggle

While intoxication culture itself is composed of individual participants, its collective, destructive power as a highly advertised, socio-economic enterprise is deeply pervasive. The fact that there are Straight Edge individuals from every background and demographic around the world not only demonstrates resistance across every border, but also illustrates how globally far and wide the negative impact of intoxication culture reaches.

### **Straight Edge: Anarchy Against the Intoxicating Order**

Within this milieu, I met individuals of integrity who were trying as much as possible to rid themselves of the prejudices which have made this world ignorant and barbaric. They were anarchists with

absurd and unrealistic as an approach to carrying out our struggle. Leary seems content to continue advising people to "Turn on, tune in and drop out," and that he really means it when he says that freedom means getting high. This is in direct conflict with the needs of the American revolution, because we feel that we need people with clear heads, sober people who have their wits about them, because we're confronted with murderous fascist police who will stop at nothing and who have so much manpower at their disposal that they're able to change shifts on us. The police put in eight hours a day, while we ourselves are not able to do that. It's not realistic or serious to suggest that people try to deal with the situation in the United States by taking acid trips or other drugs or by being high at all, in any way, shape, form, or fashion."

Cleaver goes on to say:

"...to all those who look to Dr. Leary for inspiration or even leadership, we want to say, that your god is dead. Because his mind has been blown by acid. And we say that if you think that by tuning in, turning on, and dropping out you're improving the situation, that you're changing society, it's very clear that you're doing nothing except destroying your own brains and strengthening the hand of our enemy. Because I think that in this day and time when the enemy no longer needs our legal power, when the enemy has machines to replace men, that they would very much like to have everybody walking around with their minds blown away by acid so that they could continue to run their game down on a mass of robots....in terms of protracted struggle, and in the long-term view, the drug culture is part and parcel of the death culture..."

On the early morning of August 22, 1989, Black Panther Party founder Huey P. Newton, known at the time by other members to have become addicted to crack, was shot and killed during a drug deal. Tyrone Robinson, a drug dealer for the Black Guerrilla Family, a narcotics prison gang, admitted to the killing, explaining his motive as wanting to advance in the gang in order to obtain a crack franchise.

### **The Capitalist Rainbow of Intoxication Culture**

It would be naive at best to think that drugs and intoxication culture only affect poor, black, brown, and indigenous people. White people are no exception to the struggles of addiction. In addition to impoverished areas, problems with drug use and addiction also occur in populations with middle to high education and income levels. While there is a pattern of more aggressive legal consequences for marginalized people, as well as racist stigma and stereotypes with addiction

drink, and cheated them out of their homes, guns and traps. This fraudulent system was carried to such an extent that I apprehended serious difficulties might occur, unless a stop was put to it. Consequently, I visited all the whites and begged them not to sell my people whisky."

After European contact, white drunkenness was often interpreted by other white people as the misbehavior of an individual. However indigenous drunkenness was interpreted in terms of racial inferiority. What emerged was a set of beliefs known as "firewater myths" that misrepresented the history, nature, sources, and potential solutions to alcoholism within indigenous populations. "Firewater myths" portrayed indigenous people as genetically inferior (inherently vulnerable to alcoholism) thus providing ideological support for the decimation and colonization of indigenous tribes.

### **The Battle of White Kkklay**

The Pine Ridge Indian reservation located on a 3,500 square mile rectangle of land at the south-western base of South Dakota, is home to 20,000 Oglala Lakota Sioux tribe members where the sale of alcohol is banned. Next to it is Whiteclay, Nebraska - a town with only 14 residents and four liquor stores. For over a century, this small town has been directly responsible for selling alcohol to residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation. It is said that around four million cans of beer were sold each year – 11,000 a day leading to the steady decimation of the tribe.

Whiteclay's history runs back to 1882, around the time the Pine Ridge Reservation was created. US President Chester A. Arthur wanted to create a 50-square mile buffer zone, known as the Whiteclay Extension, intended as a non-permanent 50-mile buffer zone to protect the reservation from the threat of whiskey peddlers. But in 1904, after an executive order signed by Theodore Roosevelt reduced the dry zone to a single mile, settlers were then allowed to move in and begin manufacturing alcohol, building what was known as "whiskey ranches".

Over the years, resistance came in the form of small groups of mostly woman who focused on promoting sobriety across the reservation. What was known as *Camp Zero Tolerance* became the leading force of loudly declaring sobriety and resistance. In solidarity with the youth, these sober woman worked to empower the future generations through a series of meetings and non-violent direct actions.

These direct actions took aim at preventing alcohol sales in Whiteclay – actions which included marches on the town, blockades preventing traffic in and out of Whiteclay, DUI checkpoints, and physically preventing alcohol truck deliveries.



The spring of 2017 marked the end of these sales, when a three person Nebraska Liquor Control Commission voted to deny license renewals to all four stores, citing inadequate law enforcement in the area, but likely due in large part to the extended work of the activists of the reservation.

In recent years, intoxication culture for indigenous people across the country has become further complicated due to the prevalence of methamphetamine and fentanyl, and in many cases, a combination of both. While methamphetamine alone is dangerous, highly addictive and known to cause strokes and psychotic episodes, fentanyl can be lethal at just 2mg. Methamphetamine became a major concern among indigenous populations in the 2000s. With very little help from the outside world, and very few sobriety support programs to help combat it, methamphetamine contributes to higher rates of violence, theft, and child abuse and neglect on reservations across the country.

### **Capitalism, Dope, and Black & Brown Oppression**

“Trapped in a vicious cycle of ignorance, poverty, disease, sickness and death, and there seems no way out. There seems to be no way of escape. And because there seems to be no hope, no way out, no means of escape, we turn to wine, we turn to whiskey, heroin, morphine, cocaine, opium, poison, nothing but poison.” – Malcolm X

Since their arrival by colonizers, black people in so-called America have been the target of white supremacy and racism, while also being subjected to impoverished living conditions. These experiences are the ideal breeding ground for a desperation to escape – either by suicide or chemical addiction.

In the Summer of 1966, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense became an armed force in response to the rampant racist attacks against black people all over the country. But armed self-defense wasn't the only defense the Black Panthers believed in; they also developed an analysis of - and resistance to - drug and alcohol addiction amongst the black population. Recognizing the role capitalism and the State played in using intoxication to oppress black people, many panthers began calling it “chemical warfare”.

Young Puerto Ricans in Chicago and New York City who felt inspired by the black liberation movement and related it to their own struggles with oppression started up the Young Lords Party which made its resistance to intoxication culture in general - and to drug dealers in particular - loud and clear.

“If the Lords caught you hustling, they took your dope, poured it into the gutter in front of the entire block and warned you to never feed poison to the community again. The second time they grabbed

you; it was over for you. They took you up to the top of an overlooking tenement building and hung you off by your legs, shaking you until all of your supply splashed down onto the streets. This was their final warning. If it happened again, they promised to drop you.” -Fifty-year East Harlem community resident and veteran of the Iraq war, Joey Santana

In 1970, the Young Lords took over the Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, turning it into a holistic health center to treat heroin and alcohol addiction.

For any black, brown, or indigenous resister to intoxication culture, the development of an acute sense of awareness and understanding of how colonial society is designed to formulate, within the individual mind, a narrative of disempowerment and individual self-worthlessness, was (and to this day continues to be) paramount to restoring individual self-worth and power.

Black Panther Michael Cetewayo Talbert not only understood the oppressive power of capitalism, but also the dishonesty and deception of the State:

“The basic reason why the plague cannot be stopped by the drug prevention and rehabilitation programs is that these programs, with their archaic, bourgeois Freudian approach and their unrealistic therapeutic communities, do not deal with the causes of the problem. These programs deliberately negate or at best deal flippantly with the socio-economic origin of drug addiction. These programs sanctimoniously deny the fact that capitalist exploitation and racial oppression are the main contributing factors to drug addiction in regard to Black people. These programs were never intended to cure Black addicts. They can't even cure the white addicts they were designed for.”

Amid both the protests against the Vietnam war and the rise of anti-racist, armed self-defense groups, an internal tension developed surrounding the idea of drug use as revolutionary practice. A powerful yet under-acknowledged discussion questioning the use of drugs as both a form of self-liberation and a tool of mass revolt took place between Black Panther member Eldridge Cleaver and LSD advocate Dr. Timothy Leary in Algeria. On January 12, 1971, Eldridge Cleaver made the following public statement regarding that discussion:

“I've come to the conclusion that Dr. Leary is irrevocably wed to the idea of the beneficial aspects of LSD in the context of the revolutionary movement and that he... would rather die than give up the idea of changing American society by dosing everyone with LSD. Well, this is not a principle or a suggestion that we in the Black Panther Party can in any way endorse, because we think it's