



**Weaponizing
Sobriety:
*Feral Anarchy
Against
Intoxication
Culture***

By Blitz Molotov

“We were induced to drink, I among the rest, and when the holidays were over we all staggered up from our filth and wallowing, took a long breath, and went away to our various fields of work, feeling, upon the whole, rather glad to go from that which our masters had artfully deceived us into the belief was freedom, back again to the arms of slavery. It was not what we had taken it to be, nor what it would have been, had it not been abused by us. It was about as well to be a slave to master, as to be a slave to whisky and rum. When the slave was drunk the slaveholder had no fear that he would plan an insurrection, or that he would escape to the North. It was the sober, thoughtful slave who was dangerous and needed the vigilance of his master to keep him a slave.”

-Frederick Douglass

Intoxication culture provides a normalized social environment for toxic escape. This specific form of escapism centers substance abuse and inebriation as preferred methods of emotional stress relief. As the misery of wage slavery and the monotony of industrial society create a desire for temporary escape, addiction is exploited for capital gain. This profit motive manufactures a landscape of encouragement (whether through corporate advertising or social tradition) which reinforces intoxication culture as a societal norm.

I have seen how intoxication culture expands its sphere of influence with the help of peer pressure and the propagation of intoxication as a pleasurable social activity. The realities of addiction and death are often concealed behind the facade of glorification or dismissed as mere “extreme cases”. Besides, the interconnected network of drug overdose, nicotine addiction, and alcoholism make bad selling points. For those who profit most from products that yield higher addiction rates, intoxication culture is a grocery store of profit with a variety of items and brand names. Its membership is both proliferated by a desire to escape and encouraged as a form of positive social activity. And because intoxication culture exists in society as a socially dominating force, social isolation becomes a penalty for many who remain sober. Evidence of this can be seen with how common intoxication culture is, and how very few sober support networks exist, within the anarchist milieu. This makes socializing more difficult for anarchists who are personally fighting addiction, who then relapse due to inadequate sober support from friends and the social environment. Those attempting to overcome addiction often find themselves choosing between a socialized relapse or an isolated recovery.

As an anarchist, I recognize the relationship between capitalism, intoxication culture, and the state- which merely exists as an agency seeking regulation and domination rather than elimination. The “War on Drugs” proves nothing more than an excuse to racially target individuals for incarceration. Intoxication culture often becomes a primary weapon for dismantling movements while systemically serving as a form of social control and distraction. Capitalism requires total subjugation of mass society, beginning with the individual. On an individual level this includes – but is not limited to - internalized inferiority, self-destruction, and disempowerment.

It is for these reasons that I remain sober as an individual form of negation to the social order of intoxication. As an anarchist, I view straight edge as a weapon against the state's attempt to ensnare me in a trap of distraction and toxic self-destruction. My sobriety means anti-capitalist: a molotov thrown at a passing police car, a fire that engulfs a business district, a riot beyond measure.

My straight edge is anarchistic at the individual level of reclaiming and weaponizing my mind and body. This includes my ability to communicate without the mediation of inebriation or altered states. I want to explore social interactions which flower and defy the obstacles of social anxiety without the politician-like mediator of intoxication. In sobriety the fear that holds raw emotion hostage is a fear socially conditioned by social disconnection and civilized alienation. For many different reasons contextual to each individual, most people are shy when first meeting or interacting. But this allows for a process of trust-building and bonding- both of which are shortened or eliminated when mind-altering substances are present. Intoxication then becomes the mediator of social interactions, often misrepresenting the (sober) interests of individuals, and in many cases becoming a tool for manipulation.

Social lubricants like alcohol or other mind-altering substances provide a temporary release of tension and feelings from the captivity of emotional repression. A distorted sense of freedom follows this release; freedom is conceived through ones choice to consume mind-altering substances in addition to ones freedom to purchase them. Under capitalism, access to alcohol for example is determined by age. Age becomes a numeric identifier of privilege; a distinguisher between those who have the *freedom* to purchase and consume it and those who legally do not. This materializes a hierarchy which privileges those legally recognized as "adults" with the *right* to purchase and consume alcohol. Those who do not meet the age requirement are burdened with the social mockery of being "too young" and therefore viewed as lesser in a capitalist society dominated by the social construction of "adulthood". This hierarchy provides the social and psychological encouragement necessary for maintaining business with future buyers; in theory, the same youth who eventually enter adulthood.

My straight edge anarchy is positioned against the assumed legitimacy

of intoxication culture as a marker of age-based social value. In youth there is anarchy in the courageous act of becoming an individual undefined by intoxication culture. For the youth who refuse to assimilate under peer pressure, there is anarchy in the fire set to the hierarchy of social values determined by intoxication culture. Anarchy begins with the individual; the individualist choice to conform to or defy a culture. Straight edge is the individualist negation of intoxication culture, positioning itself against a society of peer pressure which aids capitalism in its quest to profit from addiction and substance use. From this perspective, my straight edge is a youth-based refusal to assimilate into an adulthood defined by the legal right to consume intoxicants. From an anarchist point of view, straight edge is individualist rebellion ungoverned by intoxication culture.

Like the plastic and technological devices that captivate us with high-tech addiction, intoxication culture infuses addiction with death. The numbing effects of artificial reality distracting us with illuminated screens resemble the drugs that produce temporary artificial realities and perceptions to which we lose ourselves. The ecological destruction caused by the extraction of raw materials to uphold the techno-industrial society parallels the depletion of soil nutrients and chemical use of pesticides, fertilizers and growth regulators for tobacco agriculture. The death of ecosystems is the result of accommodating a popular demand motivated by addiction - whether through deforestation, mining, extracting, refining, and purifying metals or oil for technological devices, or through heavy energy/water consumption, solid/water waste pollution, by-products, and toxic emissions for brewing alcohol.

The surrendering of individuality to the homogeneity of mass technological consumerism shares another commonality with intoxication culture: peer pressure. For example, in order to remain in communication within a general populated social circle, certain technological devices must be purchased and utilized. Without them, individuals are burdened with social isolation. Capitalists require mass participation in order to profit from the products sold- whether that be products related to intoxication culture or products related to technology. The technological-industrial society which conditions our fixation on plastics and high-tech devices interconnects with the totality of a capitalist quest for marketing addiction. From this perspective, straight edge anarchy for me is a wildness hostile to the

pacifying qualities of technological addiction, intoxication, and substance abuse. My anarchy is a feral rejection of a deadening capitalist society in which life is converted to a culture of spectacles and high-def imagery commodified for consumption. I refuse to be subdued by the appeal of new gadgets and intoxication - both which socially engineer the hierarchies of class status and popularity. Rather than finding raw life in mere temporary moments of escape, I prefer raw life found in permanent rebellion - the destruction of the material capitalist world of misery that creates the desire for toxic and technological escapism.

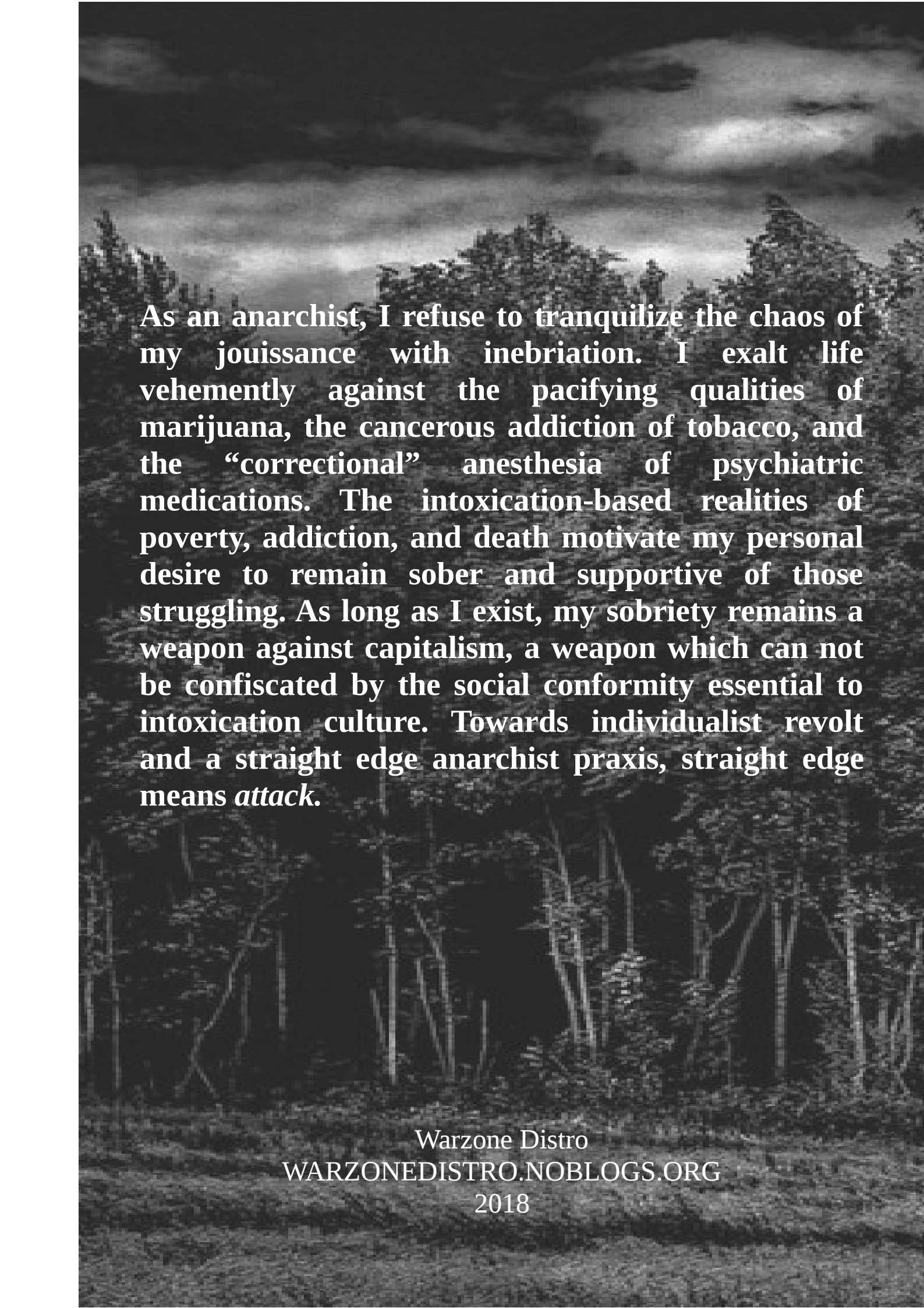
As an anarchist, I refuse to tranquilize the chaos of my *jouissance* with inebriation. I exalt life vehemently against the pacifying qualities of marijuana, the cancerous addiction of tobacco, and the “correctional” anesthesia of psychiatric medications. The intoxication-based realities of poverty, addiction, and death motivate my personal desire to remain sober and supportive of those struggling. As long as I exist, my sobriety remains a weapon against capitalism, a weapon which can not be confiscated by the social conformity essential to intoxication culture. Towards individualist revolt and a straight edge anarchist praxis, straight edge means *attack*.



“It is not a new idea that we who live in mass technological society suffer psychological addiction to specific machines like cars, telephones, and computers, and even to technology itself. But the picture is bigger and more complex.”

“What I am describing is a human-constructed, technology-centered social system built on principles of standardization, efficiency, linearity, and fragmentation, like an assembly line that fulfills production quotas but cares nothing for the people who operate it. Within this system, technology influences society. The automotive industry completely reorganized American society in the twentieth century. Likewise, nuclear weapons define global politics. At the same time, society reflects the technological ethos. The social organization of workplaces, as well as their architecture, reflects the mechanistic principles of standardization, efficiency, and production quotas.”

*-Both quotes from
“Technological Addiction” by Chellis Glendinning*



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