

SUPPORT THE



**ANIMAL LIBERATION
FRONT**

**IS STRAIGHT EDGE
POLITICAL?**



A FANZINE ON THE POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF STRAIGHT EDGE

Stuff that fits the theme

Zines:

Warzone Distro

<https://warzonedistro.noblogs.org/>

A (free!) zine creating and distributing project focused on nihilist, anti-civilization anarchy.

Rubberxhead fanzine

Insta@rubberxhead_fanzine

A zine from a queer edge person about punk and politics.

XVX Zine

xvx zine/insta@xvxzine

Bands:

xEsclatex – Vegan Antifascist Straight Edge

Divine Sentence - Vegan Mtalcore from Switzerland

Hour Of Reprisal – Metalcore from UK with antifascist themes.

Manliftingbanner- Communist Straight Edge band from the Netherlands (1992 -2018)

Heaven Shall Burn – German Metalcore, members mostly edge and vegan, take a stand for leftist politics.

SECT – Vegan Straight Edge Hardcore from US/Canada, are politically left-wing.

Vanguard – Vegan Straight Edge Hardcore, are radical left.

Lables:

Final War Records - releases XVX Hardcore

Catalyst Records - Explicit Political XVX

New Age Records - release political SXE bands

Intro

A few words before you start reading this fanzine here. First, let me briefly explain how I came up with the idea to address the question: Is Straight Edge political? I myself have been living drug-free for several years and use Straight Edge (or sxe) as the proper name for my life. The subculture often teaches me that the decision to live sober or sxe is a deeply personal one and often comes from a blunt "I'm better than you because I'm sober" and often goes along with the stereotype of the caveman who doesn't consume but instead lifts weights endlessly and hits on other people at hardcore shows. Often this cliché may be true, and I often wish that this would change, as I see that in addition to self-optimisation, there are often many more layers to which Straight Edge can be applied. I often move in anti-fascist spaces in my spare time, and from a left-wing perspective, this zine is also written - as a kind of straight edge intersectionalism. From this perspective i tried to look on differend topics like consumer criticism, sex or animal right.



This zine is made by xstreunerzeckex in april 2025/@xstreunerzeckex

What is Straight Edge?

Straight Edge, often just sxe, is a youth culture that has its origins in the hardcore punk scene of the early 80s. People who live Straight Edge primarily reject the use of (recreational) drugs. In the 80s it began as a counterculture in punk, which was tired of the drug-based self-destruction in the punk scene. Some people extend their Edge-ness by rejecting caffeine, sugar, meat/animal products, as well as frequently changing sexual partners or pornography. (the author would like to note here that he accepts it when people reject promiscuity, but supports that people should in no way be shamed because of their sexuality or the frequency of their sexual encounters). The promiscuity-thing is/was never relevant in the European scene, because straight edge here is often bonded to leftist politics, which is mostly sex positive.

Often, the so-called "edgers" could be identified by the X's on the backs of their hands at concerts. The idea came from the fact that minors would often get marked with X's on their hands at concerts so that the bar staff knew that they were not allowed to serve alcohol to those people. The X's would become a symbol of the scene and are still often found in band names (xMAROONx) or on many merch items today.



(X-uped hands on the cover of the first Teen Idles EP „Minor Disturbance“)



A drunk Nazi that pissed himself while drunk. The photo was taken in 1992 in Rockstock- Lichtenhagen, while the riots from Nazis against foreign-workers there took place. Don't be a Nazi.

ANTIFASCIST STRAIGHT EDGE



(German Nazis of the Party „Der III. Weg with a sign that says: war on drugs/March 2025. Photo by @kinkalitzken_photo))

Simply because there are right-wing associations of the Straight Edge scene, there must be a clear anti-fascist and anti-racist position out of it, which makes it clear: We are also punks, we are open, we are tolerant – for everyone and everyone. But not for Nazis and intolerance!

In the late 80's/early 90's, some people and bands expanded their edge-ness to include a vegetarian lifestyle (Youth of Today) or in the near future veganism (Earth Crisis), leading to a new sub-culture – Vegan Straight Edge or XVX.

Nowadays, Straight Edge is experiencing a bit of a renaissance. More and more young people are turning away from drugs and there are more alternative offerings like soberraves or alcohol-free beers. There are also more Straight Edge bands within hardcore. It's also fair to say that most of the people who live Edge participate within this hardcore scene.

Is Straight Edge Political?

First and foremost, I can't answer that question with or without a no. If you look at the Straight Edge scene, you'll probably come to the conclusion that for most people it's not an explicitly political thing and often doesn't go beyond empty phrases like Unity or Brotherhood. But if you ask me, I can clearly say - yes, for me Straight Edge is political. For me, Straight Edge has become part of my anti-fascist/anti-capitalist perspective and it's become the way I look at events on the political stage.

Criticism of drugs from the left and on the left

When it comes to Straight Edge, many say they live this way because they reject the self-destructive tendencies that drugs have and because they want to choose to live a healthy life. This is primarily a good thing. People who are healthy tend to be better organised and able to get started. Those who are sober tend to be receptive and able to concentrate. That's a good prerequisite for political activism, I'd say. And that's a good reason for me to live this lifestyle. But there's more to it. For me, Straight Edge is also an anti-capitalist statement about how I consume and what I consume. Tobacco companies often exploit their workers on plantations for starvation wages, their products kill and poison thousands of consumers every year. They also exploit and kill innocent animals to test their toxic products on them. The corporations don't care about the consequences or proper education and sell their shit as a feeling of lived freedom and small time daydreams, while addiction and physical harm are more likely to reflect reality. Each year, these companies make billions from the suffering and addiction of other people - and they condone it. Not to mention the rubbish their products leave behind. Anyone who lives in a major European city knows

The Dirty Side of Straight Edge

(CN: "Racism, Nazi persecution, dead")

Since Nazis and all other right-wingers have no ideas of their own, there are also brown outgrowths here: Hate Edge. Hate Edge is Straight Edge, just from Nazis.

But why become Nazis straight edge?

The focus here is probably often pure self-optimization such as physical fitness, often in connection with martial arts and an alleged superiority to the allegedly "lower races" and the proof of mental strength through abstinence. Already the National Socialists under Hitler sent supposedly "asocial", i.e. falling out of their norm to the concentration camps and killed them. This included alcoholics and other drug addicts. But that the Wehrmacht pumped their own soldiers with pervitin, also known as Panzerschokolade (a kind of meth-amphetamine) and made them addicted, probably suited her, paradoxical worldview.

The rejection of drugs also serves to polish the prevailing cliché, especially in Europe, of the beer-drinking Nazi. This is primarily attempted by national-revolutionary groups, which often also have a close relationship with martial arts and try to recruit new members through a sporting experience world. Often this supposed fight against drugs is also used to justify their right-wing narratives like: foreigners sell all the drugs and make the streets unsafe, are lazy and buy drugs with money from the state and all that shit. Social Darwinist views also play a role here. Again and again addicts and non-addicts living on the street become victims of right-wing violence and leftists are still regarded as work-shy, drunk ticks. Often the opposite is the case.

convey an image of bodies that don't correspond to reality, and the scenes shown often reproduce sexist stereotypes. Drugs on set and in the daily lives of performers are also a recurring theme, and are often consumed to satisfy the extreme desires of the production company. Pornography can also distort a realistic image of sex in the long run. I tend to agree with this argument, as it relates to a critique of consumption, which, as with drugs and veganism, reinforces the exploitative conditions of the critics and I see this as affected by Straight Edge.

THIS ZINE IS PRO-CHOICE!

Abortion-bans are murder

the amount of cigarette butts strewn across train stations, sidewalks and public squares. The same, of course, can also be applied to the alcohol industry, which promotes its drugs, especially in Germany, as a cultural asset that irrevocably belongs to every occasion, most notably as a major sponsor at virtually every sporting event. And for all that, the state collects fat taxes and earns a golden nose. It's no different when it comes to illegal drugs. Demand is as high as ever. Cartels kill each other to consolidate their power, often killing innocent civilians. High unemployment in many countries forces people on the streets to sell drugs to make some money. Often, they too, become victims of gang wars and die or end up in prison for long periods. Again, those responsible (the cartels, gangs etc.) do not care about the small dealers who send by them to their deaths. Not to mention the endproduct-users who often have no choice in life because of addiction, ending up on the streets or end up in another maelstrom of violence and exploitation through their addiction. Or they become victims of unwarranted prosecution and fall into the hands of an even greater power, that of the state, which criminalizing them. The same goes for organised trafficking with opium, meth and all other drugs.

From a left-wing perspective, we should reject these power struggles and the killings of greedy and egoist cartels and gangs, as well as legal drug producers of tobacco and alcohol. In the end, only the working class will suffer, be it dead dealers on the street or consumers driven into poverty, workers forced into addiction and death. To the powerful, they are just a necessary evil that can be replaced at will.

And this is where my critique of the left comes in: It's good that we've created spaces where people can go out and consume drugs without fear of state repression. Consumption can also be an expression of freedom. But please also think about whether

you really want to support corporations and the state with your consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, or the spiral of hatred and violence of cartels and gangs. For them it is a running system. Workers spend their hard earned money in drug industry products, to revocer from their work ,where they getting exploited. But soon they have to exploite themselves, to buy these drugs to revocer. Its an vicious cycle. The industry knows about these mechanisms and they do everything to reproduc this situation and to benefit from peoples illusion of recreation through drugs.

I know, for many on the left, abstinence is a symbol of spitefulness and the opposite of riot, bamboozle and rebellion. But abstinence can also be a sign against the hegemony of self-destruction and blind consumerism. Its a rebellion against the norm of ontoxiacation in this society and the paralysis, that ist based on. A clear head and sobriety can make us more focused on self-organising, it makes us more psychologically resilient, it can make us more angry, because can feel the pain capitalism does to us. Without a drug-deadended brain. No state can do as well as hungover and pissed-off lefties who can't get anything on the chain and get lost in party hedonism. And to be honest, addiction has nothing to do with autonomia, the opposite ist he case.

Straight Edge is political - straight edge is anti-capitalist!

where promiscuity is not viewed negatively and sexual self-empowerment is highly valued, especially in a feminist context. It took the most extreme form when Hardline emerged (an extreme offshoot of XVX that stood for things like anti-abortion, homophobia and other absurd shit), where there were adherents who used sex only for reproduction and saw sex as an "edge-break," since sex triggers hormones and is therefore a drug (edge-break, representing the behaviour where abstinence from drugs is broken). Fortunately, Hardline quickly disappeared in the 90s.

Straight Edge and Consensus:

I believe where Straight Edge can have a positive impact on sex is when it comes to consensual sex (a decision on which both parties agree). Of course, there is also consensual sex, where the people involved are not sober. But the risk of intoxication or of making decisions that might be judged differently in retrospect is clearly higher. I believe that those who are sober can often be more with themselves and see what they need in the moment and what they feel comfortable with in the longer term. This can lead to more sexual autonomy, which is as much part of feminist practice as sex at eye level and without power gaps. And besides... kissing tastes better without alcohol and erectile problems are also less common without alcohol and speed.

Pornography:

Pornography is also opposed by some in the Straight Edge scene. For a number of reasons. On the one hand, because people argue that it triggers drug-like substances (I don't agree with this argument), on the other hand, because the working conditions, especially for female performers, are often very violent and

Straight edge and sex

(CN: Pro-life nonsense, porn, sex and drugs)

It's not a typical topic that's explored as a political issue within the scene (in my opinion). But what's coming into focus more and more, even if it's only related to one point, is dealing with and accepting gender diversity and identity, outside of the binary spectrum. And that's a direction I like. This is where (hardcore) punk really needs to live up to its promise and be open to all people.

But let's talk about sex. At the beginning of the Straight Edge movement, sex was an issue, but in a way that I'm very critical of. In one line of Minor Threat's song "Out of Step," Ian Mackaye sings:

„I don't smoke
Don't Drink
Don't Fuck
At least I can fucking think“

Ian MacKaye meant to express his preference for responsible sex and often observed that men would not take responsibility for it and that in retrospect there would often be a person who did not feel well treated. (This overlaps with MacKaye's text, with what many non-male individuals report about their experiences with sex. Especially from the time they were teenagers, which MacKaye also wrote about.) Some took these lines as an excuse to forgo sex, reject promiscuity and promote this behavior. In fact, this was more of an issue in the United States. In Europe, the Straight Edge scene is often intertwined with Antifa circles,

Veganism and animal rights

As mentioned earlier, there is a connection between Straight Edge and veganism and animal rights. This movement within the scene is called Vegan Straight Edge or VXV for short. The movement emerged in the early 90s and was best known by the band Earth Crisis, which at the time stood out for its militant lyrics and stances. Even in the past, there were punk bands who opposed the consumption of meat and championed animal rights, for example Conflict and Crass from the UK, they came from an more anarchist scene.

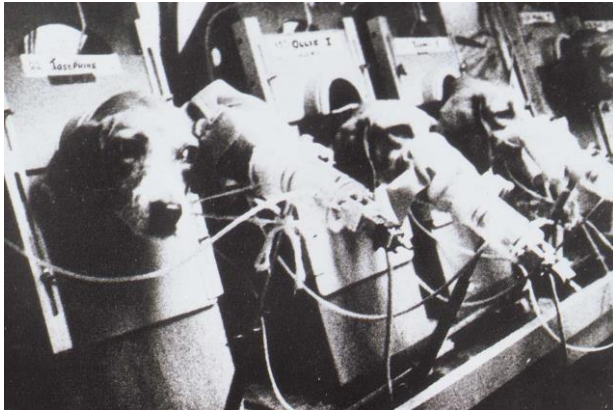


(Earth Crisis, pioneers of the vegan straight edge movement)

The connection between veganism and animal rights to Straight Edge stems from the fact that the central idea of SxE is to reflect on what one consumes. Given that animals in our capitalist society are for many merely consumer products and are endlessly exploited and killed to the extreme, it was obvious to some Edgers to deny that consumption as well and spread thier knowledge through awareness of the suffering of animals. In the beginning, the scene was set up by activist groups such as Earth First! Or the Animal Liberation Front (A.L.F.), and some still do today. There are regular solidarity concerts, for animal rights

activists affected by repression, or initiatives and animal sanctuaries. In Europe, in particular, Straight Edge and veganism is closely intertwined, and a large proportion of the edgers here are vegan.

Here, too, a left-wing, anti-capitalist perspective fits. Just as humans are exploited by humans, animals are exploited by humans even more. The difference here is that animals do not have a voice of their own to make themselves heard by the oppressor. They live in endlessly horrific conditions in factory farming and laboratories, and are often only born to be killed and tortured in medieval practice. From a left-wing perspective, the systematic killing and exploitation of the voiceless and unseen must never be tolerated or accepted, and animals, like humans, must be included in our intersectional fight for total liberation. On this topic, there is probably the greatest intersection of Vegan Straight Edge and green anarchism, which wants to overcome all forms of hierarchy, exploitation and separation between all living forms of life and seeks a return to more forms of solidarity and a re-harmony with nature and animals.



(Beagles in a lab to test tobacco products on them)

Environmental destruction is also a major political issue on the left. Mass animal husbandry is one of the major environmental destroyers. Animals that live in these herds emit vast amounts of methane, large tracts of nature must be cut down and converted to agricultural land to feed the animals, it takes vast amounts of water and energy to grow and harvest that feed, not to mention the amount of resources it takes to fatten, process, transport, refrigerate and market the animals.

All of these are some of the reasons why especially people who are straight edge choose to live vegan and why this topic is also highly political and increasingly heard on the scene.

GO VEGAN OR GO FUCK YOURSELF