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Temperance Blyck, The Youth-Liberationist Lockdown Activist

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MK: Hello and welcome to *THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES*, a podcast about queer and neurodivergent kids living out anarchy and youth liberation.

Here at *THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES* we believe that youth autonomy is not only crucial to queer and trans liberation, but to anarchy itself. Governance is inherently based on projecting linear narratives of time and Development and gender onto our necessarily asynchronous and atemporal queer lives, and youth and teens are at the center of this form of oppression.

Our goal with the podcast is to create a space by and for youth that challenges all forms of control and inspires us to create queered, feral, *ageless* networks of care.

I'm your host, mk zariel; I'm fifteen years old, and I'm the youth correspondent at the Anarchist Review of Books, author of the blog

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Debate Me Bro, and organizer of some all-ages queer spaces in my city and online. With me today is Atlanta-based activist Temperance Blyck, one of the lockdown activists of the Stop Cop City tendency!

TEMPERANCE: Hi! My pronouns are he/ze/they/it-its complicated, I am a forest defender with the Stop Cop City movement in Atlanta!

MK: So as many of our listeners know, you recently locked down at a Brasfield and Gorrie construction site in protest of police militarization and the destruction of the Weelaunee Forest. Can you talk a bit more about this action, and the Defend the Atlanta Forest tendency?

TEMPERANCE: Yas! If you haven't heard, the city is as of now constructing a 90-Million dollar, tax-funded facility that has been named by Atlanta City Council an "Urban Warfare training facility", it resides outside of Atlanta City limits and has not been agreed upon by the locals. In fact, the mayor offered the petition method to put this on the ballot, but when Forest Defenders gathered over a hundred-thousand signatures, he decided he's allowed to change his mind.

MK: Wow, that state repression is terrible—and also so undemocratic of him to ignore public opinion whenever it doesn't suit his political goals. Trans youth face this kind of hatred too, given all the legislation targeting us and the way our voices are ignored in the name of Protecting The Children...which of course doesn't include the lived experiences of actual children. Given the similar oppressions we face, would you say forest defense is a youth issue? Or a queer and trans issue? How so?

TEMPERANCE: Both! On one hand, youth are the ones who have to experience the future, and I don't need to tell you how

environmentalism—and preserving the few green lungs we have left on this earth—massively impact what that future looks like. Also, the militarization of the police doesn't look good for people who don't fit that weird American-Gothic status quo. Or really anyone tbh.

MK: In terms of tactics to create youth-liberationist futures—or atemporal youth liberation in the here and now—do you think civil disobedience is relevant in the same way it has been in environmental movements? What role would you say disruptive actions like this one play in youth liberation, if any?

TEMPERANCE: Well, I can't exactly advise youth do anything disruptive, but I am reminded of this book I read in middle school: it's called "Frindle" by Andrew Clements. Basically, grownups have a very strict view on what the world is, what's taught to us is hard to unlearn, but young people? Young people get to see for themselves. Adults know this, and it kinda freaks them out sometimes. But the truth is, y'all are often right. And youth have advantages. More than you realize.

MK: I love that art and media were so inspiring for you as a younger person. When I was in middle school, I read Emma Goldman's *Anarchism and Other Essays* for the first time, and it was my first experience of truly having a purpose and community in life—and honestly of feeling accepted in my queerness. It's so beautiful to find something meaningful in our teens, *especially* in middle school when we're faced with some of the worst social hierarchies. So on that topic, were you into community organizing, anarchism, forest defense, or youth liberation as a kid and teen? If so, what kind of organizing did you like to do?

TEMPERANCE: Welllll my schooling was unconventional –I went to an alternative school. But my parents taught me to think

for myself, so I broke gender roles and spoke out about liberation from a young age. Also, I had the Internet. I got schooled on things like gender and race equity when I was not much younger than you. Censorship is rough, but it's also impossible. There's a lot that slips through the cracks.

MK: Alternative schools are so liberatory, I'm glad you got to experience that—as a homeschooler, I can really relate to self-educating and finding meaning in ways that are inherently outside compulsory education. And yeah, censorship is so oppressive and very often targets queer media; if you've heard of the initiative Banned Books Back, there are absolutely anarchist initiatives to help queer youth circumvent that kind of governance, but it's still traumatic to live in a society where even queer *thought* is policed. So speaking of abolishing all control...what would have made organizing more accessible for you at the time?

TEMPERANCE: Maybe the education system being like, decent. God, the things I could do if I'd learned skills.

MK: That is so real...at least social movements can be decent. How would you say the Defend The Atlanta Forest tendency does with youth inclusion, and how could it be more inclusive to organizers of all ages?

TEMPERANCE: My friends and I have made an effort to make child-friendly spaces, and I get so excited when I see young people come around. It helps us remember to be good, for one, and it also is an inspiring reminder of what we're doing this for.

MK: I love that so much!! Adults intentionally making anarchist spaces kid-friendly is such a powerful show of solidarity, and as you say, makes the community better for everyone. What advice would you have for kids and teens who want to get into environmentalism, anarchy, or Defend The Atlanta Forest?

TEMPERANCE: Learn, talk, volunteer. (Volunteering is fun and you learn things) And wherever you can: create the cycles you want to see in the world. Whatever you want the future to look like, start doing it now, in all the small ways. However you can.

MK: The advice to live out anarchy in small ways is so important. As kids and teens, how we can organize might sometimes be limited, but there are always ways to resist—and for every form of statist oppression, there's always something beautiful that needs care and support. Like, for example, the Weelaunee Forest. On that note, any shameless plugs?

TEMPERANCE: Free Palestine. Download the app "no thanks", just for fun. I like "Cool People Who Did Cool Stuff" ... Follow @stopcopcity and @defendatlantaforest on Instagram for updates on the movement to stop Cop City. ... And. .. defend the Atlanta forest.

MK: Thank you so much for sharing your youth liberation journey! I'm mk zariel, this has been Temperance Blyck, and you're listening to THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES. If you want to learn more, or join us on Discord and Signal, our website is <https://thechildanditsenemies.noblogs.org/>