



DSA Santa Cruz / Ecosocialist Working Group

# A MULTISPECIES TRIBUNAL in DEFENSE of the COMMONS





## **A multispecies tribunal in defense of the common tries to imagine a world without private property.**

*Even as we intuitively know that things like water, air, food, housing, and other means to live should be available to all, while in fact they are being privatized, and even as we thus feel that privatization has overtaken our lives, another common that cannot be privatized persists.*

**Through a series of community-based,  
performative public hearings  
over the course of Spring 2020  
—now impacted by the restrictions of COVID 19—  
this public research project,  
led by DSA Santa Cruz / Ecosocialist Working Group,  
taps into our already existing ideas about the common—  
it's here already,  
if in forms that aren't quite known, seen,  
or recognized—  
and aims to help manifest them  
in sensory, collective, public ways.**

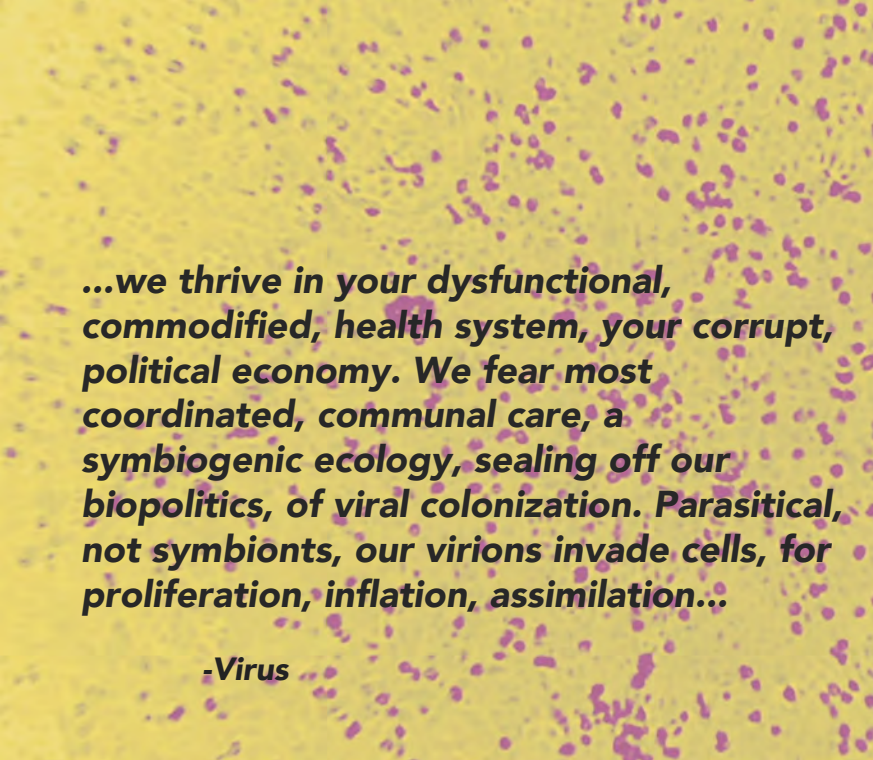
**The tribunal is gathering testimonials that offer evidence of  
harm enacted against the common by private property.**

*Participants represent a broad spectrum of human and more-than-human witnesses and their advocates, including interdisciplinary scholars, artists, and activists and community groups who work on social and environmental justice issues in Central California.*

*Potential witnesses have already self-identified in the course of a series of public walks on the Salinas River that took place over the summer and fall of 2019; they include representatives of the anti-pesticide organization Safe Ag/Safe Schools, the anti-fossil industry group Protect Monterey County (an organization fighting oil industry incursions in Central CA), arundo donax (an "invasive weed"), as well as other community and indigenous activists in Santa Cruz (Protect Juristac), Gonzales, San Benito, Watsonville, and Salinas.*

**The longer term goal of the tribunal is to develop a comprehensive understanding of what is un/common among us, how we constitute that "us", and how to promote values that recognize and privilege what is shared rather than what is privately owned and controlled.**





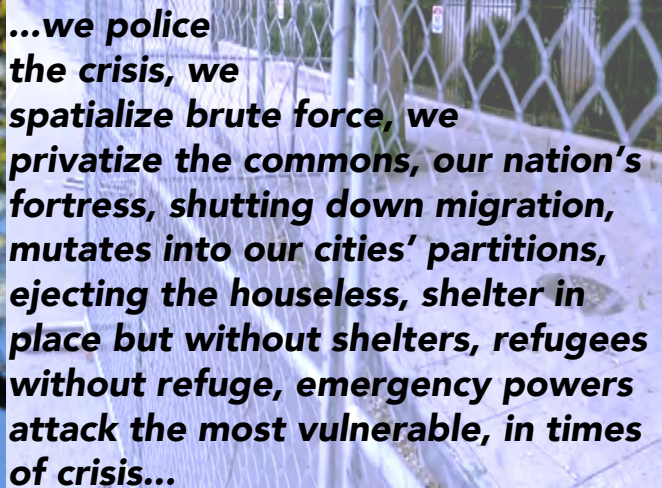
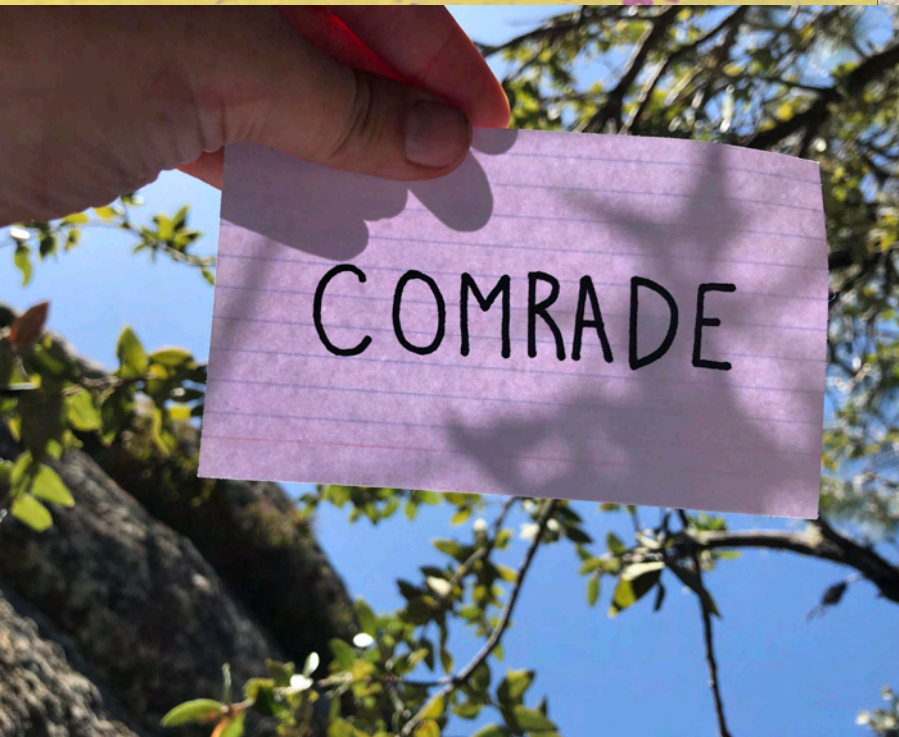
**...we thrive in your dysfunctional, commodified, health system, your corrupt, political economy. We fear most coordinated, communal care, a symbiogenic ecology, sealing off our biopolitics, of viral colonization. Parasitical, not symbionts, our virions invade cells, for proliferation, inflation, assimilation...**

**-Virus**



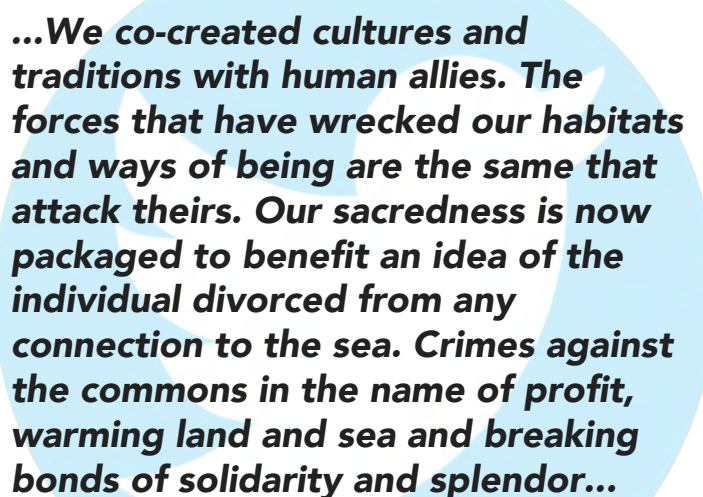
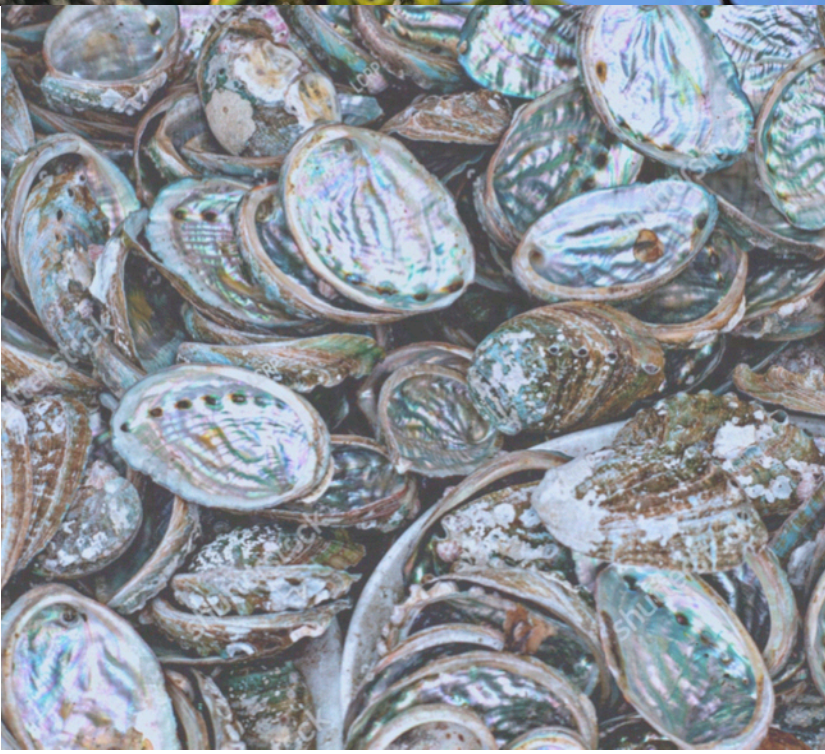
**...Our discipline mirrors your subjugation...**

**-Succulent**



**...we police the crisis, we spatialize brute force, we privatize the commons, our nation's fortress, shutting down migration, mutates into our cities' partitions, ejecting the houseless, shelter in place but without shelters, refugees without refuge, emergency powers attack the most vulnerable, in times of crisis...**

**-Fence**



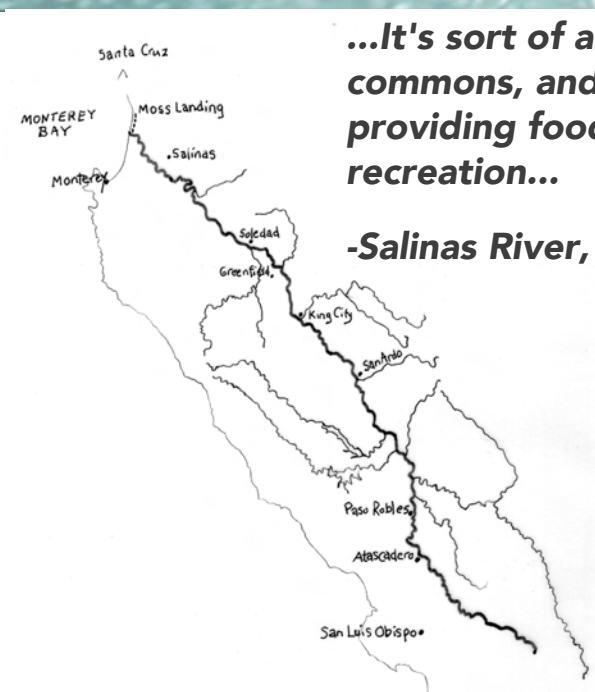
**...We co-created cultures and traditions with human allies. The forces that have wrecked our habitats and ways of being are the same that attack theirs. Our sacredness is now packaged to benefit an idea of the individual divorced from any connection to the sea. Crimes against the commons in the name of profit, warming land and sea and breaking bonds of solidarity and splendor...**

**-Abalone**



**...Unhealthy California newt eggs represent the state of nature and commons under capitalism. The pond on a golf course is drained yearly to prevent flooding of the green, causing massive algae blooms and die-offs of wildlife in the pond. A healthy river with the eggs in almost ideal conditions under water with a live frog and pieces of various plants native to the Santa Cruz area shows nature and commons under community control...**

**-Newt Eggs**



**...It's sort of a fugitive river. It's underground, it's under the commons, and yet it's providing all this upper ground stuff—it's providing food, it's providing jobs, it's providing hospitality, recreation...**

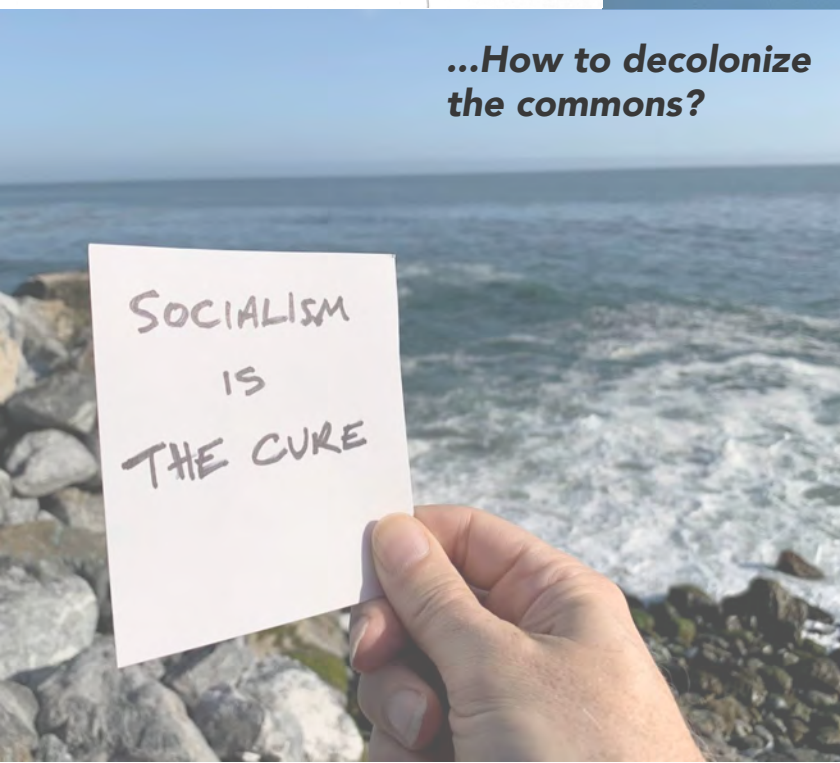
**-Salinas River, California**

*tell your stories here*

**...A platform for free speech that captures data for profit and policing...**

**-@twitter**

**...How to decolonize the commons?**



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