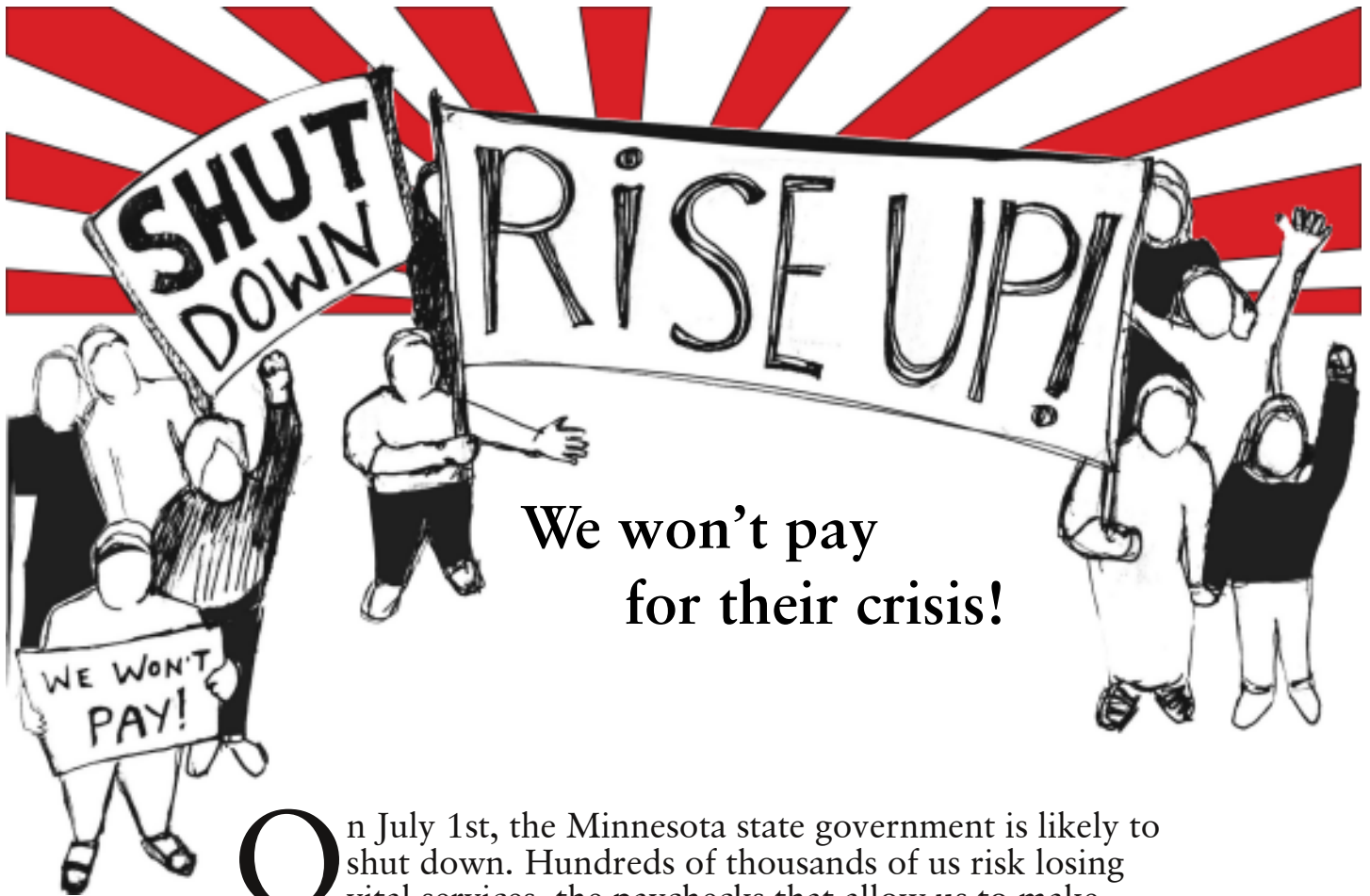


WWW.SHUTDOWNRISEUP.ORG



**We won't pay  
for their crisis!**

**O**n July 1st, the Minnesota state government is likely to shut down. Hundreds of thousands of us risk losing vital services, the paychecks that allow us to make ends meet, and even access to our own parks and common spaces. These things that the state deems “non-essential” are critical elements of our survival and well-being.

In Minnesota and throughout the world, income disparity is growing sharply. In the United States, the richest 10% control two-thirds of US net worth and the top 0.01% make an average annual household income of \$27 million. In Minnesota, which has one of the fastest growing poverty rates in the country, the richest 10% own almost half of our state's personal income, while half a million people live in poverty. Our economic disaster is part of a world-wide crisis. In Spain, Greece, and all over the world, people are being hit hard with budget cuts and austerity measures. In response, they're taking to the streets. They've stopped believing that politicians are working for them. We should take the hint.

We're converging under the banner of “Shut down, rise up!” to respond to this economic crisis, and we'd like you to join us. Starting on July 1st, we'll be coming together in Powderhorn Park (3400 15th Ave S, Mpls) every evening to share resources, organize political action, and build community. A free meal will be provided starting at 5pm every day, followed by a general assembly. Bring what you can and take what you need! [ShutDownRiseUp.org](http://ShutDownRiseUp.org)

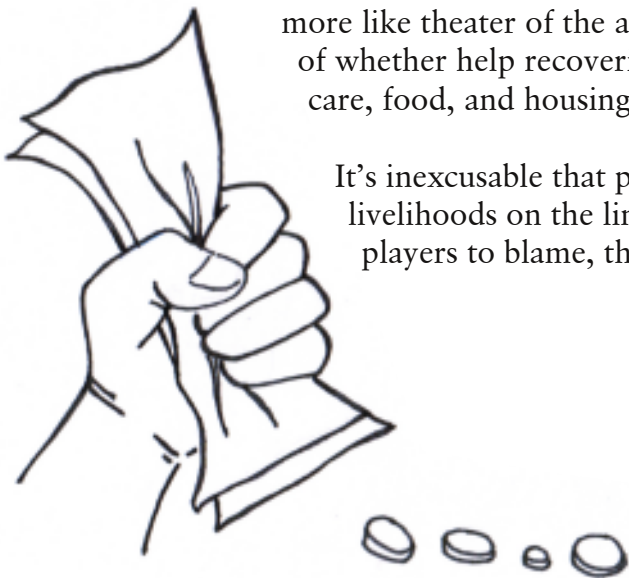
**W**e are told this shutdown is caused by a budget deficit for which Democrats and Republicans can't agree on a solution. Each side of the two-party system claims to offer their own solution to the crisis, but neither side offers a break with the political and economic system that continually screws us over.



Governor Dayton and the Republicans have both presented budget proposals that will hurt Minnesotans through massive cuts to state services. However, media coverage has largely focused on one difference between them: Republicans propose an “all cuts” approach, while the governor’s proposal includes a relatively small amount of new taxes on high-income earners. Liberal groups would have us believe that this difference alone makes Dayton’s proposal a “good” one. But, while Dayton's proposal may slow down the erosion of our rights and resources, it still leaves the rich and powerful in the driver’s seat. Neither proposal questions our current system of corporate capitalist dominance, which continually costs us more and more while providing less and less. Shutdown or not, we're facing cuts that rob our communities of future potential—like reducing financial aid for higher education—as well as life-sustaining present-day services for children, seniors, and the disabled.

Politicians' theatrical refusal to compromise is just a distraction from the fact that they’re all propping up the same ruling class, on our backs. And the debate over “essential” state services makes it more like theater of the absurd. How can there be any question of whether help recovering from a tornado or a flood, medical care, food, and housing are essential services or not?

It’s inexcusable that politicians put people’s lives and livelihoods on the line. And while we could pick individual players to blame, the whole game is rigged.



The reality is that the system we live under is designed to keep us in our places above all else. Sometimes, maintaining stability is what best accomplishes this. However, moments of crisis and insecurity (and the looming specter of these forces) are also necessary to the continued functioning of capitalism.

### What is capitalism?

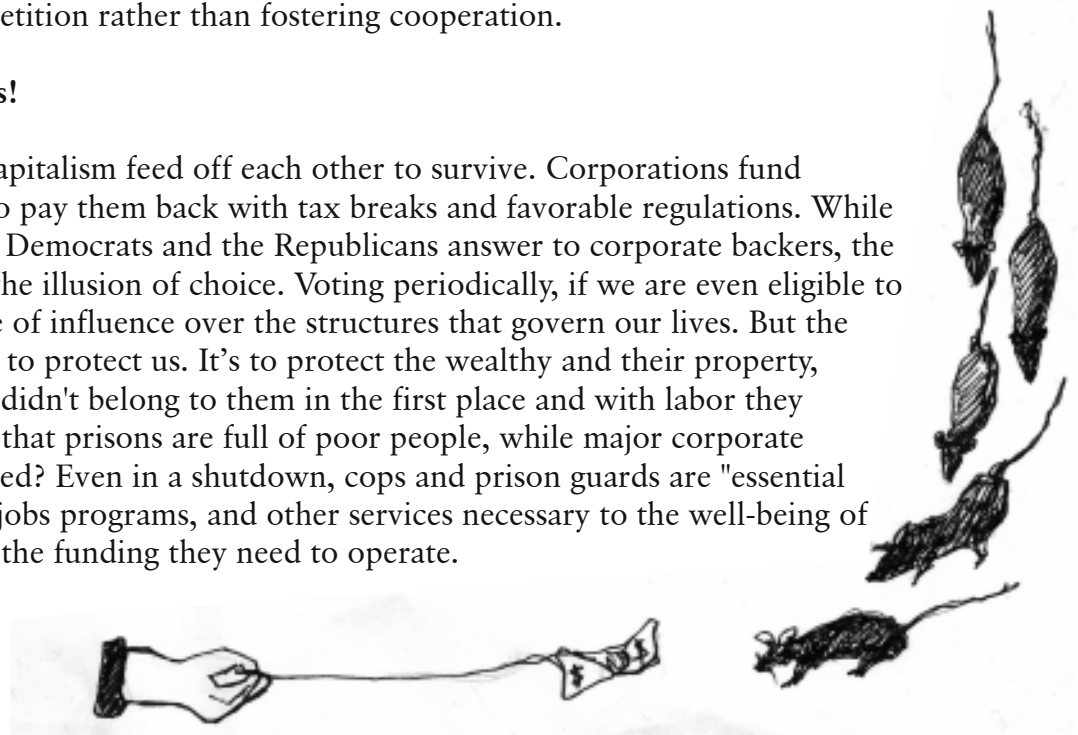
Capitalism is an economic system in which land, natural resources, and human labor are privately owned or controlled by individuals or corporations. Their primary objective is to maximize profits. Capitalism guarantees profits always come before people and the environment. Since most of the world's land is owned by a small few, it means we have to pay just to live on this planet. If we don't own land or property that can make money for us, we have to sell our time and labor to a boss in order to survive. Capitalism means that, no matter how hard we work, our bosses will only pay most of us the bare minimum to keep us alive and working while they pocket the rest. We're told capitalism means lots of choices and freedom, but our only choice is between the freedom to sell ourselves on the market and the freedom to starve... This is all that capitalism has to offer.

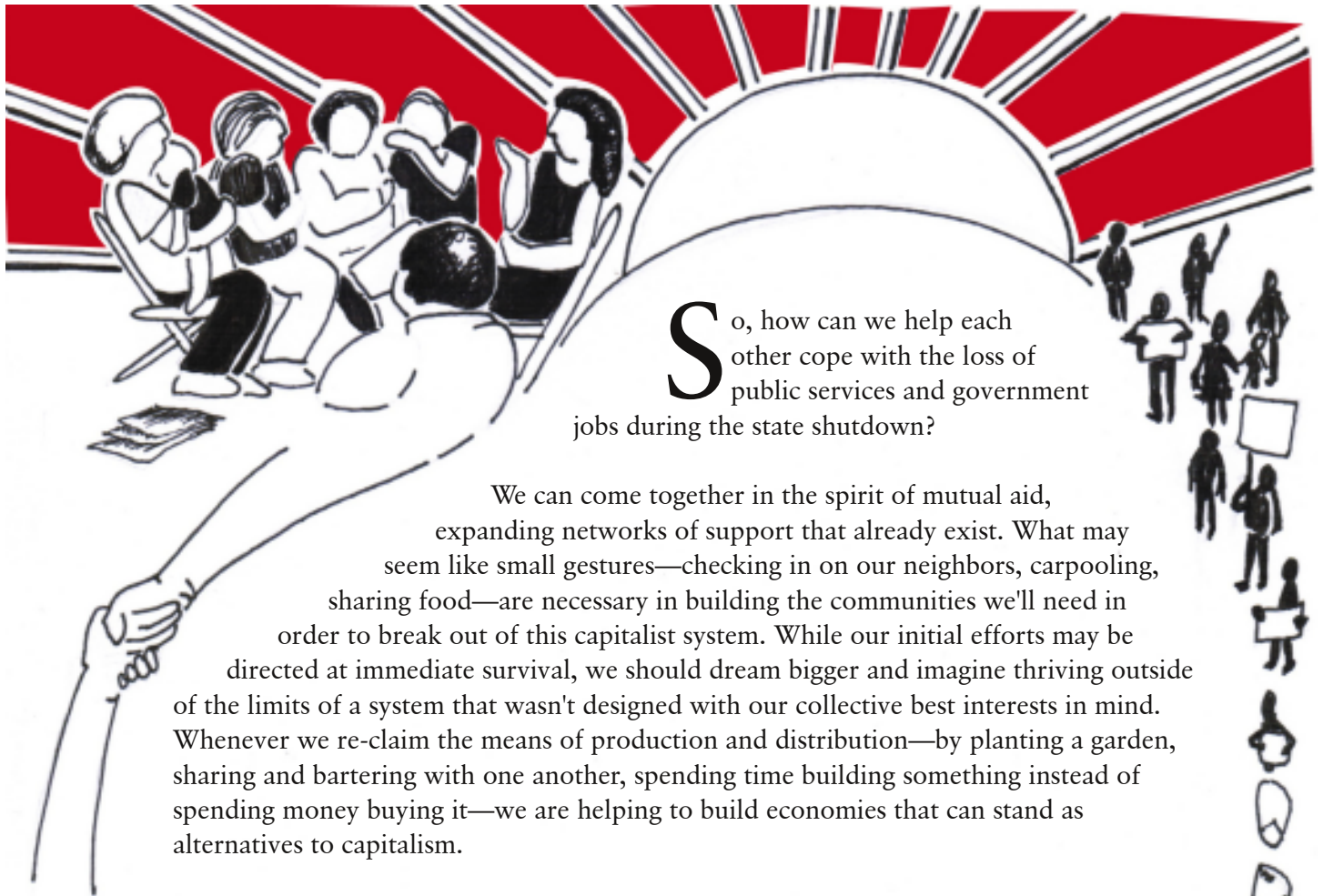
### Why does this system require insecurity?

An era of austerity like the one we're in creates an artificial scarcity of jobs and resources (though it's real enough to people in need!) and increases economic and social instability in people's lives. This supports the economic system of capitalism because it makes people more disciplined workers, more inclined to do whatever their bosses ask, just to pay the bills and get by. Even in "good" times, the threat of unemployment and instability is maintained to keep workers in line. The state shutdown is basically austerity on steroids. Politicians may even take advantage of the shutdown to make sure that not all jobs and resources come back when it ends. Insecurity pits us against each other in a rat race of competition rather than fostering cooperation.

### But the state can protect us!

Not really. The state and capitalism feed off each other to survive. Corporations fund politicians' campaigns, who pay them back with tax breaks and favorable regulations. While behind the scenes both the Democrats and the Republicans answer to corporate backers, the two-party system gives us the illusion of choice. Voting periodically, if we are even eligible to do so, gives us a false sense of influence over the structures that govern our lives. But the state's main function is not to protect us. It's to protect the wealthy and their property, which is built on land that didn't belong to them in the first place and with labor they didn't pay for. Ever notice that prisons are full of poor people, while major corporate crimes go largely unpunished? Even in a shutdown, cops and prison guards are "essential employees" while schools, jobs programs, and other services necessary to the well-being of our communities may lose the funding they need to operate.





So, how can we help each other cope with the loss of public services and government jobs during the state shutdown?

We can come together in the spirit of mutual aid, expanding networks of support that already exist. What may seem like small gestures—checking in on our neighbors, carpooling, sharing food—are necessary in building the communities we'll need in order to break out of this capitalist system. While our initial efforts may be directed at immediate survival, we should dream bigger and imagine thriving outside of the limits of a system that wasn't designed with our collective best interests in mind. Whenever we re-claim the means of production and distribution—by planting a garden, sharing and bartering with one another, spending time building something instead of spending money buying it—we are helping to build economies that can stand as alternatives to capitalism.

These same networks can also rise up and confront those at the top, taking what is rightfully ours. The ruling class caves only when there is a threat to their legitimacy or power; it is this, rather than moral persuasion, that changes what is possible. We need to take over and radically re-organize our workplaces, schools, and communities so that common people are collectively in charge, not the rich bosses or government bureaucrats.

That's a tall order, but we can start today by organizing circles, committees, groups of co-workers, students, and neighbors for discussion and action. Let's abandon corporate stock prices as an economic indicator and count instead how many people on our block we can turn to in times of need.

There are no satisfactory short-term solutions, only survival strategies. When politicians say that there is no money to care for our communities and that we should all make sacrifices, what they are really saying is that the yachts and diamonds of their rich backers are more important than our parks and schools and bread. We need to take a clue from our overseas friends and reject the rotten "solutions" being offered by politicians. They're asking us to the dance but the corporations are calling the tune!

**We can—and must—do better.**

