

# SMASH THE LABOUR-RELATIONS ACT!



## BUILD UNITY!

# SMASH THE LRA

**Every oppressed person must support the struggle against the LRA. The struggle to smash the LRA is also a fight for better housing, more jobs, more and better schools and hospitals, cheaper transport and electricity, more UIF pay, more of the things we need**

## Background to the LRA

The South African state is facing a serious political crisis. Apartheid policies have been decisively rejected by the majority of citizens. The state is only able to retain power by force; by the declaration of the state of emergency, by detentions, by putting the SADF in the townships and by suppressing all opposition. These measures will eventually be defeated.

But the state and the ruling class also face a critical economic crisis. This is linked to the political crisis. The capitalist class is trying to solve the economic crisis by squeezing even more profits out of the working class. To do this the capitalist class needs to keep wages down and to replace more and more workers by machines.

## The purpose of the LRA

The LRA aims to make it hard for workers to take strike action. This will keep wages down and make workers work harder. Also, the LRA aims to reduce job security so that management can hire and fire much more easily. By weakening workers and their trade unions in this way it will become much harder for workers to fight for housing, jobs, schools and hospitals.

## All Sections of the working class must be involved

The LRA is a clear attack on organised workers, but it seriously affects other sections of the working class as well :  
• by limiting the right to strike, the LRA reduces the ability of organised workers to fight for higher wages and this will mean that people in the rural areas and the townships who depend on

workers wages will starve

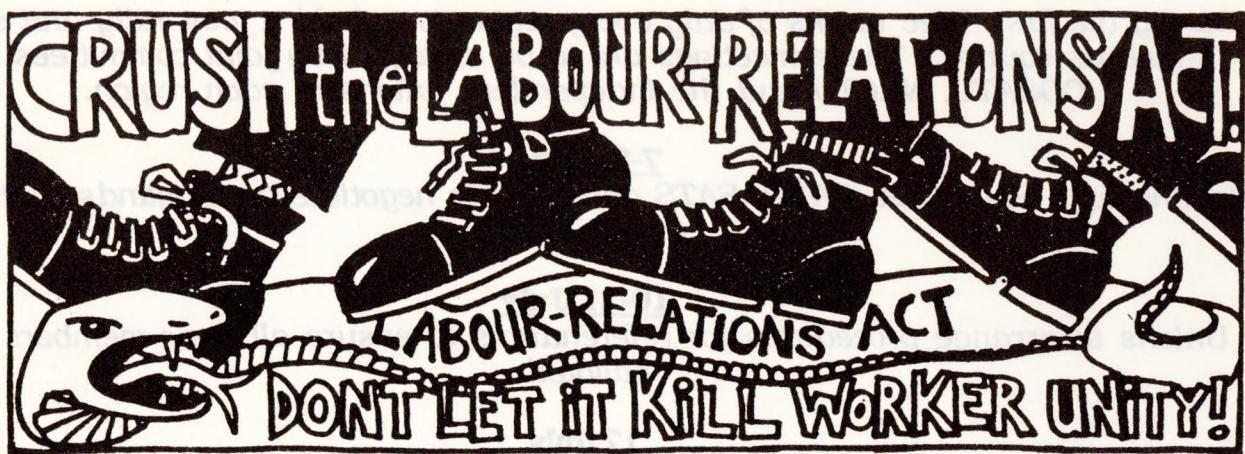
- by introducing penalties for so-called illegal action the LRA weakens the unions ability to engage in mass action with other sections of the working class
- by increasing managements rights to hire and fire and to replace workers with machines, more jobs will be lost - this will increase the numbers of unemployed and it will mean fewer job opportunities for young people leaving school
- by excluding farm, public sector and domestic workers, the LRA will increase divisions amongst the workers and will leave these sections very weak and vulnerable to employers

## Part of a broader strategy

The LRA is only part of a broader strategy by capitalists and the state to deal with the economic crisis. They also have other plans - to squeeze more money out of the working class.

Firstly, the state is privatising many services like health, housing, transport and also many big state owned companies like ISCOR, ESCOM and SATS. Instead of the state running these services and companies they are going to be given over to big businesses. This will mean more retrenchments and services will become very expensive. Most of the working class will not be able to afford these basic services.

Secondly, the capitalist class wants the state to cut back on income tax for companies and rich individuals. They are pushing the state to spend less on social services and to tax workers more. That is why GST has gone up to 13% and there is now a new tax on



workers - SITE.

Thirdly, the state and capitalists are busy trying to remove the legal protection that workers have through Wage Determinations and Industrial Council Agreements. They want to deregulate (take away laws) for small and new businesses so that workers can be paid very low wages and can be forced to work under the worst conditions.

Fourthly, businesses are being relocated to the homelands where employers can pay starvation wages and workers have no trade union rights.

#### Fighting the LRA

It will not be easy to force the LRA to be changed. It is going to require that the whole trade union movement together with our allies commits itself to a clear and sustained programme of action in order to achieve our demands. This programme of action cannot just be made up of slogans and protests because we know the state and capital will just ignore these.

If we lose the fight against the LRA it will be possible for the capitalist class and the state to carry out further attacks on the working class. If we win this fight the united working class - workers, students, unemployed - can resist their other attacks.

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# Organise and unite to fight the LRA. Forward to SOCIALISM

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# ***Our programme of action***

*During the first three weeks of July every region is to hold a joint rally and shop stewards council. These meetings are to be arranged by joint committees of COSATU, NACTU and the independent unions in each region.*

## **7-8 July**

*Meeting with SACCOLA, SAAU, SATS and NMC to negotiate on demands contained in our letter.*

## **10-21 July**

*Unions to arrange procedures for referendums to ensure all their members are balloted.*

## **17 July**

*Meeting with community organisations at 2.00pm (NACTU offices) to further discuss their support for the LRA campaign.*

## **22 July**

*Further meeting with independent unions to plan the campaign.*

## **24-28 July**

*Every union to conduct referendums amongst their members.*

## **28-29 July**

*Each union to compile ballot results and to submit results on standard form to the LRA co-ordinating committee.*

## **5-6 August**

*Second Workers' Summit to receive report on ballot results and to receive a report-back on negotiations with employers.*

## **Our position:**

- All workers must be covered by agreed legislation
- Negotiations between unions and employers must take place in one national forum
- Workers' Summit will consider reports on ballots and negotiations and will decide on further steps

**All unions to conduct  
referendums of all members  
from 24-28 July.**