

EDITORIAL

WORKERS AND ECONOMICS

THE Worker movement in South Africa is now stronger and better organised than at any other time in South Africa's history. But worker organisation always faces new challenges. Because of our present economic crisis one of the greatest challenges is to understand and criticise the policies that control our economy.

As workers we labour hard to produce the wealth of this rich land, but then before our own eyes the employers and Government carry out policies which benefit them and not us as workers.

We have always been told that the productivity of South Africa's workers is low and not growing. FOSATU did not believe this because our own experience told us a different story. So FOSATU asked economist Charles Meth to investigate the kind of information on which these claims about low productivity were made. The results of the study are carried on this page.

These results confirm FOSATU's suspicions - clearly worker productivity is not the problem. But even more serious - the study shows that unemployment is getting worse.

South Africa has actually been growing at an average of 5.9 per cent each year from 1970 to 1980 and this has created only 101 000 new industrial jobs each year compared to some 200 000 to 270 000 new work seekers each year. The problem is very, very large. In fact this makes a mockery of all Government economic planning. The Government talks of a 4.5 per cent target but clearly this is far too low.

However, the real problem is this - for any country to grow on average at 5.9 per cent per year for ten years is a great achievement. This means that our chances of growing at a higher rate for another ten years are very low indeed - but we would have to do this to solve unemployment.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

It means that it is our whole programme of economic policies that are wrong. It means that the wealth of our land is being misspent. It means that greater worker productivity is being sucked away into expenditure on defence, into buying expensive playthings for the rich and into South African companies investing their money outside South Africa.

None of this benefits workers - they have had to sweat for their wage increases. These increases have only been crumbs from the table and have only been given because our unions fought for them. But even these increases leave millions to starve and others struggling in poverty.

Worker organisation must face these problems. It is our job to prepare clear economic programmes and policies that will benefit workers.

Let us state our economic demands and build the strong organisation we need to win these demands.

FOSATU STRIKES BACK AT FALSE ATTACK ON WORKERS

STRIKING a gigantic blow against the false attacks on workers by both employers and the State, FOSATU has released the results of a crucial study on worker productivity. The study carried out by economist, Charles Meth, has produced results of great importance to the worker struggle in South Africa.

The main findings of Meth's study reveal that:

- * South Africa's economy grew at an average of 5.9 per cent each year between 1970 and 1980 and not at the 3.6 per cent reported by official Government statistics.
- * The productivity of South Africa's workers has not stood still or fallen as is so often claimed by employers and Government Cabinet Ministers. What is shown is that the wage increases so unwillingly granted by employers are earned by workers through their own sweat and organisation.
- * There are serious problems with Government figures that measure the output and income of our economy. These problems will have to be solved before we can get a true picture of what is happening. However, one thing is clear - workers are not the cause of the unemployment and inflation in South Africa.

What these results mean for the worker struggle is set out in the Editorial.

FOSATU requested the study because it did not believe the claims made by employers and the State that it was workers who were causing the problem. We did not believe that unemployment and inflation were caused by wages rising faster than the output that workers were producing. At a FOSATU national seminar in 1982 Charles Meth - who has assisted FOSATU before - was asked to carry out a thorough investigation.

The first fruits of this study have struck a blow against the attacks made on workers and their unions by the State and employers. However, the study has also made it clear that with the present Government policies great hardship lies ahead. Considering this the FOSATU Central Committee committed itself to developing an economic programme around which workers can organise to achieve a real share of the great wealth of South Africa.

Commenting on the study, FOSATU's president, Chris Dlamini said workers expected

that their productivity would be used to create jobs for their sons and daughters but 'some irrational and selfish lot use our productivity for their own interests.'

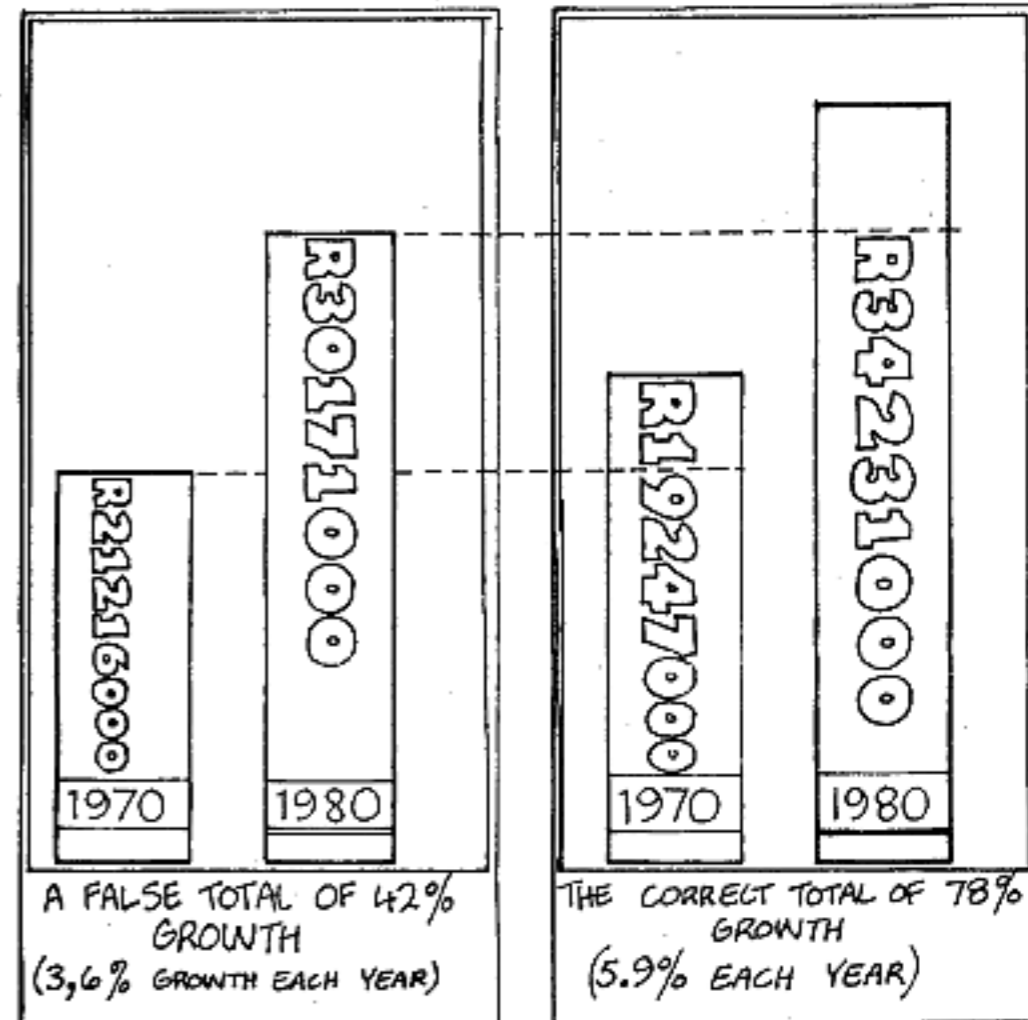
'Hence South Africa is faced with massive unemployment which is unnecessary. If the economic policy was set out and monitored by people committed to the welfare of the working class, in our country unemployment would be minimal,' he said.

'Workers have a right to demand a clear economic policy because it is our sweat and blood that generates the wealth of this country,' Brother Dlamini said.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Government's Story

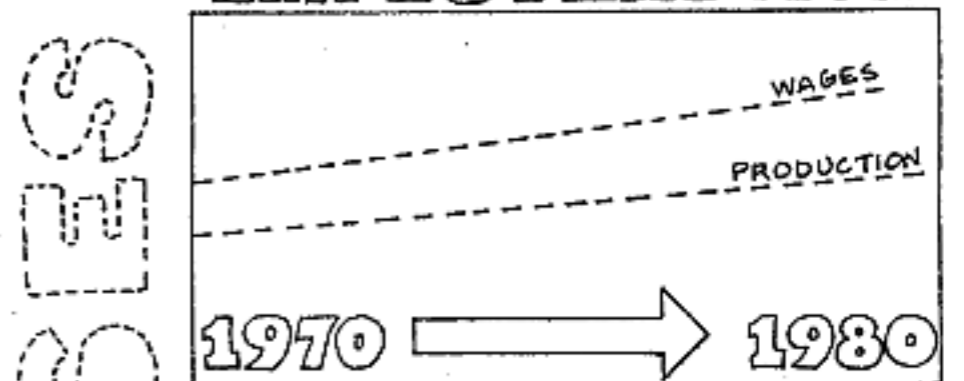
The True Story



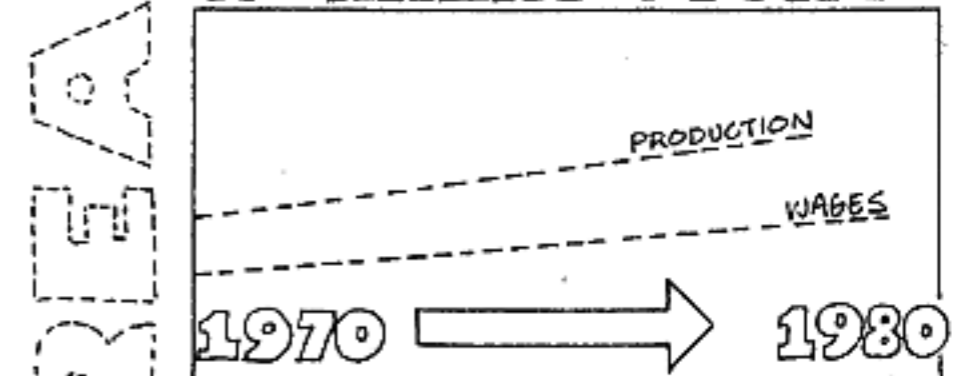
PRODUCTIVITY..

HARD WORK FOR CRUMBS...

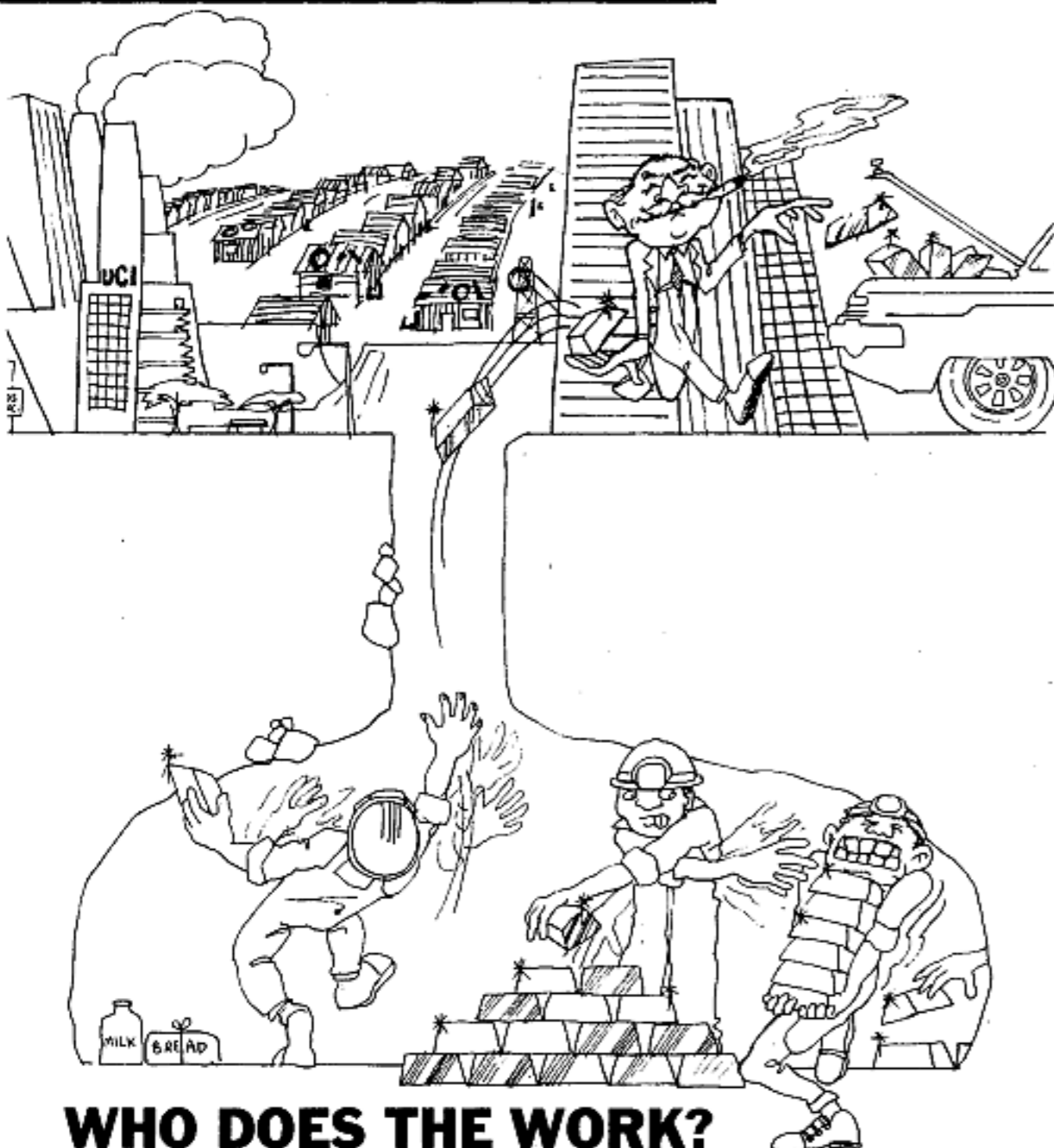
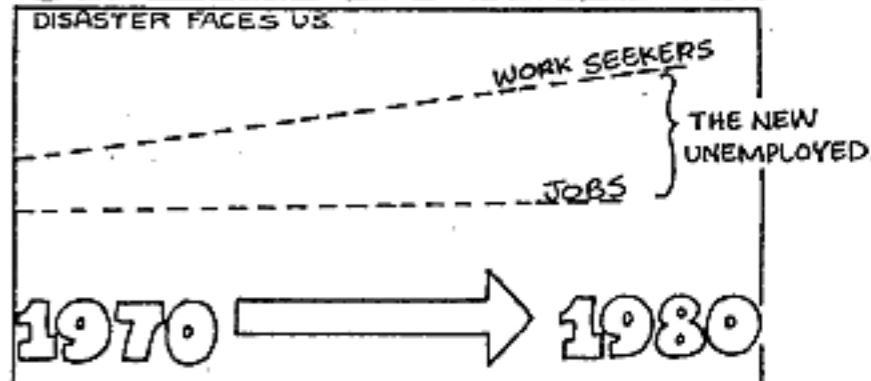
EMPLOYERS STORY...



WORKERS STORY...



UNEMPLOYMENT...



WHO DOES THE WORK?