

Factory & High School—Same Thing

John Taylor

1970

High Schools build strong Axle Plant workers twelve ways. Count 'em:

- High Schools have separate parking lots for teachers and students. Axle Plant management parks just outside the factory gate; the employees park far down the street.
- Many high schools have uniformed guards in the halls. Plant Protection men constantly patrol the aisles of an Axle Plant.
- In High Schools students eat cheap institutional food, 12 to a table, in chrome, stainless steel and plastic cafeterias. They usually have 20 minutes to eat lunch. Axle Plant workers eat cheap institutional food, 14 to a table, in chrome, stainless steel and plastic cafeterias. They have 15–30 minutes to eat depending on their shift.
- A teacher almost always assigns a seat to you, and expects you to be in it; you are questioned and sometimes punished if you leave your seat. In an Axle Plant the foreman assigns you a job and expects you to be on it and working-when the whistle blows. If you leave your work area the foreman comes looking for you.
- If you leave your classroom you have to have a hall pass. If an Axle Plant worker is sick or injured on the job, he has to get a medical pass from the foreman.
- A student returning from an absence must have a letter from his parents explaining and excusing his truancy. An Axle Plant worker who's been off sick must have a letter from his doctor confirming he was unable to work.
- High Schools emphasize productive effort and competition for grades. The teacher grades your performance, taking into account your attendance record, your attitude (“citizenship”) and your academic output. If he's satisfied with your work, he passes you on to the next grade and you stay in school. Students with good grades and “high citizenship” get scholarships and good citizen awards from the American Legion, Chrysler Corporation and the DAR. Production output is the main criterion of worth in an Axle Plant. At the end of your 90 day probationary period, and when you quit (or are fired), your foreman grades your performance, taking into account your attendance record, your attitude and your skill in turning out gears and axles. If he likes your work, he recommends you be kept on the job; when you leave the Corporation, he recommends whether or not you should be rehired. Workers with good work records often get the easier jobs.
- College prep. students and athletes get most of whatever extra benefits a High School can offer. Skilled tradesmen in an Axle Plant do easier work and get paid more than ordinary production workers.
- Teachers do not like troublemakers. The best thing to do if you want to get along is keep your mouth shut, do the work the teacher wants you to do the way he wants it done, and pick up an easy passing grade. Foremen

do not like troublemakers. You won't have any trouble in an Axle Plant if you keep your mouth shut and do the work the way the foreman wants you to do it.

- If you're a classroom troublemaker the teacher sends you to the office to talk to your counselor or the principal. If your Axle Plant work record is poor, the foreman takes you to the Production Office and the General Foreman decides what to do with you.
- Your High School will reprimand you, keep you after school, suspend you from class for a few days or longer, or expel you for breaking the rules. An Axle Plant foreman disciplines an employee by warning him verbally, writing him up, giving him days off, or by firing him.
- If you finish your classroom work early the teacher usually lets you do what you want as long as you stay quiet and don't disturb the other students. When you make your production in an Axle Plant the foreman doesn't care what you do until the end of the shift as long as you don't disturb someone else from getting his production.

Both teachers and foremen carry the message of American society: "Get the work out, do a good enough job, and keep your mouth shut."

fifth Estate

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