

Kirkby: Profits up, but workers out

Another 505 jobs are in jeopardy in Kirkby. This time the firm is the Fisher Bendix factory.

On June 17 while the convenors were meeting with the management, redundancy notices were being distributed on the shop floor, affecting 505 workers.

This followed the loss of 175 jobs earlier in the year.

The factory has the capacity to employ some 3,800 workers, but it has never provided jobs for more than 2,500.

A few weeks after the takeover in May by Thorne electrics, the redundancies were announced. A company statement said:

"The Bendix business continues to lose money but we think it is capable of paying its way, providing the necessary skills and efforts are put into it."

Events took a new turn with the discovery by the shop stewards of correspondence between Fisher Bendix and a Spanish firm to produce 20,000 tumble-driers in Madrid, and a claim by them that they were required to help crate machine tools originally installed in the Kirkby factory (with the help of a Government investment grant) for transfer to an address in Madrid.

Some 400 workers marched to petition Harold Wilson and gave him copies of letters sent to the Spanish firm.

Mr John Davies, the secretary for industry, has been approached by Wilson, but he has not yet received

Derek Massey reports from Fisher Bendix factory

a reply.

On June 25 the whole of the Fisher Bendix work force came out on strike in support of those threatened with redundancy.

After the management rejected a demand from the shop stewards that redundancy notices should be withdrawn until local and national talks were held, the notices were given back to the management.

Dirty game

The strike was made official on July 13 by the AEF and TGWU

Management continued to send notices through the post, almost all of them have been returned.

It appears that Thorne electric play a dirty game even in dealings with their own kind. The Stock Exchange are conducting an enquiry into the takeover by Thorne of the Fisher Bendix plant.

In spite of claims of poverty

the company were able to scrape together £8,000,000 to repay a loan to BMC.

They also estimated that the cost of their washing machines comprises £76 materials plus £10 labour - they retail at over £200.

Thorne electrical industries' pre-tax profit for the year to end March, were £6,000,000 up on last year, at £37,200,000. A report to share holders described it as a "very satisfactory year, and the directors are looking forward to continued growth."

Pretty grim

Now, with recent redundancies totalling over 5,000 on Merseyside, and Kirkby with 20% unemployment, with more redundancies in the pipeline, the future looks pretty grim, especially for the school leaver.

15% of the total number out of work in Kirkby are between 15 and 18 years old, and this in a town with the highest population of under-21s in Europe. And these figures do not include those leaving school this summer.

The workers at Fisher Bendix are making a stand against this rising tide of unemployment. They, and others in a similar position, will need support, and this must begin on the shop floor with those still employed.



Take Your Pic...

The Catholic Pictorial took exception to the Free Press article about the Catholic Church in Liverpool.

They called the priest who wrote it a 'gutless wonder' and criticised us for publishing the article anonymously.

In agreement with the priest we decided against using his name in order to avoid embarrassing other members of the Catholic hierarchy.

Incidentally, we turned inside to the Catholic Pic's letters page and discovered a horde of 'gutless wonders'. Every letter was signed 'name and address supplied.'

Shareholders' Action Group Plan Takeover

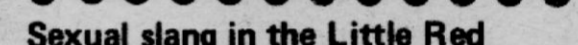
It's the GEC-English Electric Annual General Meeting next month and SHAG (the Shareholders' Action Group) are planning what they describe as a dramatic intervention.

Members of the group include those who buy shares so they can go to company meetings and don't worry much about the size of dividends on their 'capital'.

Things which bother SHAG are: GEC-EE supplying the American Air Force with equipment for use in Vietnam; the company's subsidiaries in South Africa and defence contracts with the South African government; and the appalling 'rationalisation' programme (remembered only too well on Merseyside) in which 17,000 men lost their jobs and Arnold Weinstock got a 50%

pay rise.

Former employees (or conscience stricken shareholders) who want to help should write to SHAG, c/o Paul Wesley, 5 Caledonian Road, London N 1.



Sexual slang in the Little Red Schoolbook caused much embarrassment to Mr Michael Corkery, prosecuting counsel in the recent court spectacular. To avoid quoting the book directly, he attempted to translate offending passages into language more befitting a QC.

His translation of "It's easier for boys to come than girls" went: "It is easier for boys to have an ejaculation than it is for girls." The laughter which followed was not widely reported in the Press.

The obscene little schoolbook

The Little Red Schoolbook is obscene, we're told. But most people who have not read it probably have a very inaccurate idea of what it is really like. The sections which don't deal with sex or drugs (most of the book, in fact) have hardly been mentioned in the Press. So here is our second extract, re-printed to help Free Press readers make up their own minds

Note: We've no more copies of the complete book at the moment, but we're hoping to get some more soon.

Your teachers

Teachers are there to teach you not the things that you as an individual really need to know, but rather the things that other people think you ought to know

Many teachers have never done anything apart from teaching. As a result they may not know much about life outside school. Many of them come from a different social background to their pupils and were brought up at a time when the world looked different. As a result they may not understand you and your ideas about the different world you are being brought up in.

All this is not the teachers' fault. They work at school every day. They are forced to

prepare you for exams set by other people with which they themselves may disagree. It's very difficult to say exactly how much a particular teacher gets paid. The exact amount depends on how many years he's been teaching and what training he's had. He gets extra allowances if he's head of a department or has some other position with extra responsibility. But most teachers are underpaid in comparison with people in other jobs who have the same level of training.

In the last few years teachers have become discontented about all these extra jobs and are already starting to say "no". For instance, after a long campaign teachers are now no longer obliged to do a dinner duty. But since it's very rare that adequate alternative arrangements have been made, some teachers feel that they have to go on doing it, even though they really need a break and some time to prepare.

Support your teachers in these campaigns. In the end it will benefit you when they don't have to work all hours. A teacher who's exhausted by far too many hours of work can't do anything very well. Most teachers in Britain are overworked if they do the job properly, and it's particularly exhausting if they're new to the job. *What do teachers know about you?*

Even if over the years your teachers spend many hours with you, the chances are they won't know much about you. Your parents may know a bit more, and your friends will know most.

As a rule an ordinary teacher doesn't know



what your living conditions are like; where your father and mother work and how much they earn; how many brothers and sisters you have and where they go to school; how your parents get on together; what your parents think of the teacher and the school; A bad relationship often develops between teachers and pupils because they don't know enough about one another. If you feel that a teacher is treating you badly because he doesn't know enough about you, don't feel afraid of telling him more about yourself, who you are and what you want to do.

Teachers often influence you without you noticing it. Directly or indirectly they put across certain standards of behaviour which may be good or bad. They control your

development to some extent - but this doesn't mean that you can't have any control over it yourself. The relationship between children and grown-ups can only be right when both sides influence each other.

Don't be afraid of telling a teacher you like that you enjoy his lessons. But at the same time try to influence him to make things better.

If everybody dared to be honest with each other all the time, our present school system would collapse very rapidly. But as a rule neither teachers nor pupils dare to be honest with each other.

If being honest doesn't work and all your suggestions get talked to death, then act to show that you mean what you say. Actions speak a lot louder than words.

The best way to act is to simply do what you've talked about for so long. If there are things you've wanted to introduce into school - whether in lessons, in breaks or after school - and you've been refused, start them by yourselves.

You should first make sure that there are a lot of other pupils who are dissatisfied with the same thing as you - and preferably some teachers too.

Before you start, everybody should be told about the problem and what you want to achieve. Use the school magazine and notice boards. Make your case clear by using posters, banners and slogans. Talk to teachers who have your confidence. Talk to other pupils during breaks.

If anyone is singled out for having started the demonstration, be loyal to them. Go with them if they are to be told off or punished.