



CENTER FOR LABOR RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
(415) 842-0323

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720 c1982

REQUEST FOR MATERIALS: WORK IN AMERICA IN THE 1980'S.

The Center for Labor Research and Education is interested in recording for future generations what it is like to be a working person in the United States in the 1980s. Missing from American history is a record of the lives, the conditions, the dreams, hopes, and frustrations, of the working people in past generations who did the work involved in the creation of today's society. The scholars who write labor history can tell us about events, the leaders, economic conditions--but they have little access to the lives of working people.

WHAT DOES THE LABOR CENTER WANT?

We want articles, stories, poems, sketches, drawings, essays--written by working people--which describe the jobs working people do, the conditions under which they work, their feelings about their jobs, their relationships with co-workers, how they view supervision, the hardships, the fun--whatever is important to the person involved about his/her work life.

WHAT WILL THE CENTER FOR LABOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION DO WITH THE MATERIAL?

Our goal is to create a repository of information about American working life. It will be a record for future generations, for scholars, for interested people, for students.

Additionally, however, we would hope that from this material would come a book--a published record of working life. This second goal would be dependent upon what materials we receive, interest from publishers or from funding sources interested in producing a book about American working life as seen by the worker. For now, our goal is collecting information.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE MEAN:

This could be the opening paragraph for an article --

The bell clangs at 7:00 a.m. and the noise starts. The presses start banging, the tuber starts slamming, the sewing machines start clicking and the conveyor belt starts humming. I take my eyes off the

women operators on the machines and start watching the belt. In a moment the first piles of paper bags--cement, flour, sugar, whatever we are running that day--start moving down the belt. I grab four bundles of twenty-five each, slam them down in the press, hit the foot pedal, tie two ropes around them, release the press and swing the bundle over onto a pallet. That's my job. I bale bags. But there's a lot more to it than that. Let me tell you.

WHO DO WE WANT TO HEAR FROM?

Anyone who works for a living. Laborers, machinists, postal workers, office workers, electricians, nurses, salesmen, loggers, longshoremen, waitresses, airline pilots, script writers, teachers, surgeons, bureaucrats, engineers.

PROCEDURE

Prepare something. Any length. Typewritten if possible, but not necessary if your handwriting or printing is readable.

Mail your contribution to:

Worker Writing Project
Center for Labor Research and Education
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

All contributions will be acknowledged. For additional copies of this bulletin, contact the Center for Labor Research and Education or the nearest copying machine.

CONTEST

We hope the collection of this material will be a continuous process. To get it started we've managed to get some prize money for initial contributions. All materials received by December 1, 1982 will be eligible for cash awards.

one award of \$100.00 -- Best Article
one award of 75.00 -- Runner-up
two awards of 50.00 -- Next Best

Judging will be done by an objective committee of University of California faculty members.
