

World-Wide Class Struggle Pictured In Labor Defender

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Reviewed by
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THE March Labor Defender is the kind of thing I'd like to take back South with me in big bundles. When you have a magazine like this along to hand out, organizing goes easier.

Somehow I can't get out of the habit, whenever I read a new book or article or pamphlet, of thinking about it this way: would it do any good if I handed this thing out to Annie Mae in the Fulton Bag Mill in Atlanta, or to Jim on the farm in Tallapoosa County? Would they understand it? Would they learn anything from it? Would they want to organize and fight for better conditions after they read it?

And if I can say yes, then I think that that's a good piece of reading matter and ought to be spread.

These people I'm talking about are just like I was in 1931, before I'd joined up with the Unemployment Council and the Communist Party. They know there's something wrong, but they're not clear what it is. And when they fight the bosses and landlords, they don't always know that workers and farmers in thousands of other cities and hundreds of other countries are fighting too. And they don't as yet know much about the history of class fights.

One thing this March issue of the Labor Defender gave me was the sense of class fights going on and on, beginning years back, growing day by day, getting bigger and more powerful. This issue is devoted especially to the Paris Commune, which was the first workers' government there ever was. The workers of Paris set it up in 1871 and kept it going for 77 days. It made me feel good to read about it, and especially about Louise Michel, who was one of its bravest women. I'd like to give that article to all those workers who still think—because the bosses want them to think so—that women aren't much use in labor struggles.

THIS Labor defender also brought back the feeling I got the first time I went to a national conference of the working class movement, in Chicago. Before that I'd thought there were only a few dozens of us in Birmingham, but when I got to Chicago I realized that there were hundreds, thousands, actually millions of us, all over the world, fighting for the same thing. Here in the Labor Defender, I found news of the defense movement all over the United States, all over the world—San Francisco and North Carolina, Arkansas and New York, and places in Europe so far away that up to a few years ago I'd never even heard of them.

One new section that's been added to the Labor Defender, and that will be regular from now on, is the part that explains about workers and farmers who were arrested, defending themselves in court. I know how important that is. The Labor Defender gives good, clear, simple explanations of why working class prisoners should, in many cases, defend themselves in court, and just how to do it. You speak in court, and reach hundreds and maybe even thousands of people with your ideas and your program, and then the bosses and the judge and the prosecutor find they've got more on their hands than they bargained for.

I advise everyone to read the March issue—you'll want to read the others every month after that.