

Book One, but also Book Two!

More importantly, it is possible that the inexperienced reader may take too literally the few protections which are available to farmworkers and incautiously run to the law, only to be disappointed, or even worse, lose his/her job.

But these are small concerns, set beside what is a thoroughly useful guide for the farmworker and his/her allies in the fight for the rights of farmworkers. ☆

'Farmworkers and the law' is available from the Black Sash, Queensbridge, cnr Juta & Bertha Sts., Braamfontein, Jhb. Price: Workers - R2, Salaried people - R5. Organisations - R10. Postage: R1

Miners International

by *LABOUR BULLETIN*
CORRESPONDENT

The Miners International Federation (MIF) celebrated its 100th birthday at its congress held in Harare, Zimbabwe in March. South Africa's NUM is the MIF's biggest affiliate. Unions from 17 countries, including the United States, Germany, Norway, Phillipines, India and Zimbabwe, were represented by 111 delegates. Namibia, Peru, Botswana, and others attended as guests.

The congress passed a resolution to convene an international health and safety conference on the mining industry. Another resolution called for the MIF executive to push for a merger

with the other international miners federation, the IMO. This resolution was proposed jointly by NUM and United Mineworkers of America. In the IMO are communist-oriented miners' unions in the east, the west and the Third World. It is affiliated to WFTU. It was formed in 1985 when the British NUM and the Australian Miners Federation broke with MIF.

The congress was generally "very dull" according to NUM. But the discussion on South Africa "put all congress delegates into top gear.....Speaker after speaker condemned the system of apartheid and brutal treatment of workers at the hands of the mining bosses and the apartheid regime. Delegates would not have hesitated to march on Pretoria."

The NUM report on the congress summed it up as follows:

"The congress proceedings seemed to be a bit down for NUM delegates who continuously rose to sing at the end of each session, thus bringing some life into ongress proceedings.

"The congress could have been a lot more interesting and educative if open debate and discussion was a concept which is built into MIF traditions. It was patently clear to South African delegates as well as Latin American delegates that in the MIF tradition decisions on resolutions and other major issues are taken by the office bearers and the executive committee way before the congress is held, resulting in the denial of congress delegates the right to speak and debate issues thoroughly before decisions are taken.

"In the MIF tradition, it would

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seem like the resolution committee is given too many powers in that the resolutions are seemingly debated in a committee setting and only compromises are recommended to congress for acceptance. This proved to be clearly frustrating particularly for unions like NUM where thorough debate and discussions precede a decision that is taken by congress on any issue.

"A number of the delegates on NUM's side felt that there was a need to start changing the traditions and practices of the MIF if unions from developing countries where miners are still waging important struggles against oppression and exploitation are to benefit. This evaluation seemed to have the support not only of the NUM delegates but delegates from countries such as Latin American and African countries.

"Finally, it became apparent during the proceedings of the congress that our delegation had not prepared as much as it should have and had it done so, it would have made its interventions in a much more effective way than it did. This however does not mean that the NUM delegation did not prove themselves to be members of a progressive and militant union in terms of the clarity of their views and forcefulness with which they made interventions at the congress.

"International congresses such as this one are clearly extremely important in forging solidarity amongst miners world wide and also forming important contacts. This proved to be true when some members of our dele-

gation met sometime with comrades from Peru, Colombia and Guiana and discovered that the struggle they are waging in their countries are no different from the struggle we are prosecuting in this country. The Peruvian Miners took the opportunity to express their deepest gratitude to the NUM for having made a solidarity grant of \$10,000 to them during their strike in 1988. [See article on Peru on p 114]

In typical tradition and fashion, the NUM delegates once again proved their dominance of congress proceeding by rising as the President closed the congress to sing the South African national anthem (Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika), at which all delegates at the congress rose to join in even if some of them could not sing or follow the words. What is significant is that they all raised their fists in the way that miners and workers in this country do and thus the congress ended on that high revolutionary note." ☆

CCAWUSA organises in the food retail trade

By CCAWUSA

Fast food outlets represent the fastest growing sector in the South African economy. Their growth rate has been estimated at between 15 and 20% a