

Report from First World Trade Union Congress of Trade Unions of Pensioners and Retirees

Comrades and Friends

The meeting took place in Barcelona which has a proud history of opposition to the fascist Franco forces in the Spanish Civil war and was extensively bombed as a consequence with loss of life. Some of the delegates had been jailed and tortured during the following years when working underground against the fascist regime. Delegates from Latin America had similar stories to relate of the struggles and persecution in their own countries due to repressive governments and the struggle against imperialism.

With 21 countries and a hundred and ten delegates attending this historical meeting to address the attacks on the Pensioners and Retired communities of these countries to sought the assistance of the Trade Union movement and communities to work hand in hand to counter the attacks on the hard won social conditions that require for the aged to live their lives in dignity.

Firstly I would like to thank the organizers for the tremendously hard great job that was done, it is never an easy task but the support of every delegate was great.

With the opening address by the president of the Barcelona retired trade unionist and addressing the attacks that are facing all of us, we understood the need for this historic conference to be held.

Delegate after delegate reported the attacks on their social conditions, and expressing the need for solidarity on a global base to combat the attacks, for the hunger of greed is never satisfied, with the trade union being under attack in most countries, we see urgent need for action to combat the attacks

I also took the opportunity to go to London to meet with the UK pensioners I had a four and a hour meeting with the National Secretary Dot Gibson

which was very interesting as she outlined the many campaigns they are waging against the attacks by the Conservative Government against the pensions concessions. I also was able to meet with the RMT veterans at their union offices and to learn about their problems and activity.

Here in Australia the aged have never been under attack as with this conservative government.

There is a concerning trend emerging in Australia economic policy debate that seniors should cough up for the good of the nation. Calls to increase the pension age, tighten pension the assets test, review superannuation and the older people to draw down equity from their homes to fund aged care are all being bandied about as solution to current and future budget challenges

The intent with Medicare been under attack forgetting that we all contribute through our tax levy ,but no word on the 5.4 billion that is given to private enterprise by medical rebates, with an increase in the population and the high prices of doctors' visits, then of course .the attack that we are living to long, what a statement to make, nothing regarding the contribution that is made still by the aged in the voluntary capacity that is done saving the government approximately 5 plus billion dollars each year

Now the employment minister Eric Abetz want to trade penalty rates for flexibility not forgetting that our aged pension is made up of the average male wage and all is incorporated into that structure to evaluate the outcome

What needs to be done? We would suggest that a mass movement should be built up of all those effected by the Abbotts Governments agenda of the "end of the era of entitlements" while we agree that we need to re-elect a Labor Government the immediate issue is building up a mass movement.

Comrades the time has come to counter all these attacks we cannot allow this to continue for we will lose everything and our children will have nothing.

United we stand divided we beg

Yours in Solidarity

Fred Krausert

National Secretary

MUA Veterans