

Lund, Sweden. NETWORKING is amongst the responsibilities involved in the campaign for equality and non-discrimination, and The English International Association of Lund has had a busy year with that feature of our work. During 2001 our volunteer networkers have reported from Cape Town, Lagos, Cairo, Singapore, Los Angeles, Ontario, Seattle, Tokyo, New York, Stockholm, Norrköping, Malmö, Geneva, Miami, Amsterdam, London, Berlin, Paris and dozens of small and major cities conducting this important feature of our work. Just before the year ended we had another opportunity to network with organisations that share our interest, this time in Norway. We were represented by our best representative, Stanley Worgu, of Nigeria. Below is his report:

The Trip to Norway.

As the day brightens on Wednesday morning, 19th December 2001, I woke up set for the journey to Oslo. I was eager to make this Christmas trip to one of Scandinavian finest cities as I later came to discover. I had already telephoned my friends in Norway and they already had my schedule handy.

After 10 hours of journey, my train finally pulled up at the Oslo central station. I walked briskly from the rail platforms into the big magnificent edifice which serves as the reception hall of the train station, I was particularly amazed at how the magnificent reception hall with its modern architecture was fused to the old reception hall of the central station with its Victorian architecture. This was a quick testimony of the transformation of Oslo into a modern architectural masterpiece. As I meditate on the entire schedule of my journey, I briefly ran into a tool control officer who stopped me for questioning even though other passengers walked carelessly towards the street like free citizens. I felt a little bit humiliated and initially responded very harshly to the guy, he later tendered an apology only when I said that my intention to visit Oslo was to network with other anti-racists organisation.

I was met on arrival at the Oslo central station by an old friend of mine called Amadi J, we walked through the streets of Oslo as we saw the bright sides of Christmas. Shoppers cuddle big bags branded with different designer's name, hopping on and off from the city busses, trams, trains and the cyclists and motorists struggle to meander their way through the streets of Oslo. The following day was a Thursday, I and my friend had a nice time in some of Oslo's big museum such as the Akershus Castle, Norwegian Architecture Museum, Ethnographical Museum, and Oslo Cathedral.

In the midst of this great beauty and lovely city architecture is hidden the evil hands of racism in Norway as a whole. Walking through the city may not quickly smack off the smell of racism for any first time visitor, except for the curious minded individuals. Though steeping through the doors of my train from Gothenburg after a long journey and been the only one stopped by a man with "Tool Control badge" branded on his uniform and been questioned on the reason of my mission to Oslo while others walk like free citizens towards the street is enough for me to understand the level of discrimination even though it sounds like a hastened opinion. To add proofs to my assertion, similar expressions of discrimination of immigrants in Norway was frequently expressed by the anti-racists movements and associations in Norway.

The same day I met the Director of the Norwegian Anti-Racists Centre, Mr Nadeem Butt at the secretariat of the organisation. We had an interesting discussion on how to combat racism in Scandinavia and Europe at large and possible areas of Network in future. I went on a guided tour of the organisation's secretariat, its history, staff strength and the functions of the various departments. I was equally informed of the present campaigns organised by the centre, successes and difficulties. Members of English International and other interested public are very much welcomed to come over and obtain ore information if they desire. Readers are also welcomed to visit the Website of the Anti-Racists Centre in Norway, located at <http://www.antirasistisk-senter.no>, the site is available only in Norwegian.

At the Norwegian Oil City-Stavanger.

As the train from Oslo pulled up in Stavanger City station, I looked out of the window to catch a quick glimpse of the city. Like every Norwegian town, this city has its own charm, an old canning and fishing city but currently has the status of the Norwegian oil city. My host here was Mr Orevaoghene C. Obaro, the Secretary of the Immigrant Federation of Norway (INLO). Mr Obaro hails originally from Nigeria but now a Norwegian, a very articulate and energetic man with several years involvement in the struggle for an end to all forms of discrimination.

Stavanger is a glamorous city and has an ancient Viking history and commands an international and cosmopolitan structure. It is the 4th largest city in Norway and my host Mr Obaro had to ensure that I get the best from my visit to this beautiful city. I was much delighted to visit INLO office downtown of Stavanger. The organisation is one of the foremost anti-discrimination organisations in Norway and is a network of organisations involved in a collective effort to combat all forms of anti-discrimination.



Stavanger City Harbour. Photo: Stanley Worgu