

Joe Wheatley
Youth Committee Member (GMB - Yorkshire & North Derbyshire)

Report - TUC Norway Trip

Thursday (30/03/17)

- Arrived at Manchester Airport with Jawad Khan (GMB)
- Greeted by Bill Adams (TUC)
- Met up with our Unison colleagues (Ruby Nicholson-Pallett and George Aire)
- Arrived in Oslo and greeted by Are Tomasgard (LO)
- Discovered Norwegian trains run efficiently
- Checked into hotel and was given a brief tour of the city
 - Visited LO Headquarters
 - Brief history of the 2011 Norway attacks Oslo & Utøya and saw the scars still very present in Oslo from the bombing. Are told of his personal experiences in Utøya and the sadness shared by all across Norway after the event and the solidarity felt around the world.
 - Learned briefly about Norwegian history predominantly with regard to their two national languages
- Had dinner and later met up with Lars (one of Jawad's Norwegian contacts)

Friday (31/03/17)

- Set off from Oslo to Sørmarka (LO Conference Centre)
- Greeted by Amund Moholdt and Kent Jelle (the translators for the main conference)
- Brief overview of the centre
- Met by local trade union journalist who wrote an article regarding our visit: [*Jeg blir skremt av all hatkriminaliteten*](#) - The article covered why we were there and why programmes like this are important. We discussed how we were learning from our Norwegian colleagues about how they engage with individuals and encourage trade union membership and activity. We also discussed Brexit, Norway in the EEA, the rise of rightwing extremist politics and much more.
- Lunch - Engaged with fellow Norwegian youth trade unionists
- Met up with the Youth LO committee - They introduced themselves and explained what the purpose of their meeting was, which was to discuss the "Summer Patrol" and improve their media presence during the "Patrol"
- ("Summer Patrol" - A thirty year old trade union programme that takes place across the whole of the country. Trade unionists during the summer go out and speak to first time employees about joining a trade union and the importance of the union movement)
- Jawad and I were asked to speak in a small group session about Brexit to those in the gas and energy unions. Discussion expanded on the division between older and younger Norwegian trade unionists over Norway's membership of the EEA
- Attended opening of the youth conference led by Are Tomasgard
 - Political discussion on the upcoming September elections in Norway
 - Jawad and I both addressed the conference about the importance of working to secure a victory in those elections, explaining the current political and social situation in Britain and the dangers of allowing the conservative government to go unchallenged.
 - Excellent political and social discussion overall ranging from oil drilling in the north, privatisation of the railways, trade union membership and much more.
- Conference concluded for the day, which was followed by dinner and a social gathering afterwards

Saturday (01/04/17)

- Opening of conference - Brief discussion on the upcoming elections and what the LO needs to do
- "International Speed Dating" - Three hour seminar where our Norwegian colleagues could come and ask us questions about issues in the UK, we discussed:

- Working conditions
- UK employment rights
- Minimum wage vs collective pay bargaining
- The EU / EEA
- The Summer Patrol
- Engagement experiences with young people not in the trade union
- Age discrimination pay (i.e. pay for 18 year olds vs 25 year olds)
- Etc.
- Lunch
- Returned to conference hall - Speech by Hans Christian Gabrielsen (potentially the next General Secretary of the LO), he talked on the following:
 - Upcoming election - What the conservative government were doing and the implications of their policies
 - Trade Union membership - Activities being undertaken to increase membership
 - The contention between trade unionists over both membership of the EEA and oil drilling along the northern coast
 - The good work being undertaken by the youth LO
- Questions put to the speaker
 - Jawad spoke about local authority cuts and the need to protect local authority funding
 - I spoke on rail privatisation and the need to fight the conservatives at every stage on this subject to secure a national service
- Another political speaker - Maria Simonsen
 - Spoke of the rise of right-wing extremist politics across Europe and America
 - Highlighted the need to safeguard Norwegian democracy and politics from this type of right-wing extremism
- Dinner, followed by a themed "LO" party

Sunday (02/04/17)

- Conference opened with party political youth representatives from the Socialist, Labour, Green and Liberal parties
 - Representatives spoke about their party position on various issues
- Questions from the conference to the representatives
 - Liberal representative questioned over their party's involvement in the conservative coalition and policies that were undermining national services and the trade unions
 - Green representative questioned over anti oil drilling policy and the alternatives the party were seeking to offer
 - Labour representative questioned over policies not necessarily being radical enough
 - Socialist representative questioned over their party's seeming lack of commitment to seek to unite with the Labour Party to ensure a left-wing coalition in power
- Lunch
- Took a group picture
- Farewell and headed back to the airport to return to the UK

PICTURES - TUC NORWAY TRIP

