

UACES Scholarship 2010

Eric O'CONNOR, *University of Wisconsin at Madison*

Outline of Project

I undertook archival research in the United Kingdom this summer for my dissertation, entitled "Frames and Campaigns: The Message that Integrated Europe 1950-1992." My dissertation, which I expect to complete within two years, will examine the selling of European integration to member-state citizens from 1950-1992 in England, Germany and France. For many years beginning in the 1950s the European Community built sophisticated networks of propaganda to educate citizens on European integration, but polls regularly concluded, and continue to show even today to a lesser extent, that member-state citizens were largely ignorant and disinterested in the integration process. My dissertation looks at citizens and organizations who publicly advocated a particular opinion on European integration at key moments in three member states throughout the Community's history in an attempt to explain why citizens have historically been so disconnected from the integration project. I will focus on the most salient frames found within the message of integration in each country, and then analyze responses at the grassroots level (via integration-specific organizations, the media, and constituent letters to elected officials) at moments when the issue of integration crystallized in the public eye.

Academic Achievements

The entirety of my trip this summer was dedicated to archival research. The UACES Scholarship and the support of UACES and the European Commission allowed me to complete nearly all of my primary research in the UK - about one-third of my total dissertation research. The scholarship also allowed me to make contact with professors abroad in my field, such as N. Piers Ludlow at the London School of Economics, and Linda Risso at the University of Reading.

Use Made of Resources, Facilities Abroad

The UACES Scholarship allowed me to travel to the UK and access material that is only available at archival sites. Overall, I visited six archival sites in the UK over six weeks. I began at the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick, then traveled to the Labour History Archive and Study Centre in Manchester, and then moved down to London to examine material at the University College of London Special Collections. In all three archives, I focused on constituent letters expressing an opinion on European integration to elected officials. The papers of Michael Foot, Hugh Gaitskell, Maurice Edelman, and Denis Healey contained the richest collection of letters. At the BBC Written Archives Centre in Reading I reviewed radio scripts that addressed the topic of European integration, especially during the debate leading to the government's decision to join the European Community in 1971. While in London, I made visits to The National Archives in Kew to photograph their copious collection of pamphlets on European integration. And lastly, I traveled to Hull History Centre in Hull to examine the papers of Anne Kerr, a former MP and leader of the organization Women Against the Common Market in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Positive and Negative Aspects

The trip was overwhelming positive. I did not stray too far from the budget I set for myself, I worked quickly and efficiently in the archives, and I returned to Wisconsin with a much sharper focus for my dissertation. I hope to sustain this positive motivation as I travel to France and Germany next academic year to complete my dissertation research. I had originally planned this summer to visit the Conservative Party Archives in Oxford, but time did not permit, so I hope to visit them at some point next year. But otherwise, I accomplished everything I hoped to accomplish.

I'd like to once again gratefully thank the generosity of UACES and the European Commission for providing the financial assistance necessary for me to undertake research for my dissertation in the United Kingdom.