

My Year at UW-Madison

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George L. Mosse Exchange Professor Academic Year 2010, UW-Madison

Reaching the end of our stay in Madison, my family and I are enormously pleased and grateful to the George L. Mosse Program for giving us this extraordinary opportunity.

During the year, I have been working fruitfully on my project on "Globalization Backlash and the Rise of Anti-hegemonic Party States" making major advances both in research and writing. This project, my first major project in the field of world history – up to now my main publications have been on medieval Iberia – is very ambitious and seems very promising to me. That personal impression was strengthened during the several occasions in which I was able to present my preliminary findings and conclusions both at UW-Madison and at the University Pittsburgh and to discuss my research with several colleagues at UW-Madison. Many comments, criticism, and suggestions by colleagues have been of enormous help in fostering and enriching this project. The extraordinary resources provided by the UW-Madison Libraries were crucial for the development of this project. In a nutshell, the project addresses the prevalent narrative on the history of globalization according to which there was one wave of globalization from 1850 to 1914 and a second one from 1973 until the present. The aim of the work is to research globalization backlash between these two waves. The central argument is that from 1917 to 1976 a particular political strategy became widespread worldwide. This strategy, defined as the anti-hegemonic party-state (AHPS) is characterized by a twofold reliance on state bureaucracy and party apparatuses in order to mobilize society with the ultimate goal of improving the state's and society's position in the world division of labor, wealth, and power. The definition of this political strategy and its adoption by many types of

regimes also defies the established ways in which political regimes are usually classified and contributes to redraw political regimes classification.

Along with my research, I conducted during the spring semester a History 600 seminar on “Medieval Iberia: Conflicts and Encounters”. On a thematic level, this seminar stressed the political conflicts and cultural clashes as well as the processes of integration and acculturation that characterized the interactions between Christians, Muslims, and Jews in medieval Iberia. On a methodological level, the seminar aimed to train the students into scrutinizing primary sources, analyzing outstanding publications based on these same sources, reconstructing the bottom-up and top-down procedures used by historians to sustain their arguments, and finding ways to formulate alternative arguments. Most of the students proved to be very interested in both the subject and methodology of the seminar and I am truly satisfied with their response to the course. For me, it was a very enriching teaching experience.

As a family we settled extremely well immediately upon arrival. Our children had adapted very well in their new schools. They certainly profited much from this stay in terms of gaining a new language and culture as well as broadening their horizons. All through the the year in Madison we felt most welcome and every request and need was kindly attended.

The George L. Mosse Program provides faculty and graduate students in my department, the Department of General History at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem with an extraordinary and unique opportunity for exposure to differing intellectual traditions, different historiographical approaches and themes, wider access to sources, and acquisition of international experience. Many of our best students have profited enormously from this program. For many of them it represented a major turning point

in their careers as they were able to foster the writing of their thesis, dissertations, or first books, participate in international conferences, proceeding with higher education and even employment in Israel and overseas. For young faculty, like me, besides all these benefits the Mosse Program offers the opportunity to concentrate on research and writing, a vital necessity after several years of a heavy teaching and administrative load. The George L. Mosse Program certainly made a major imprint in me by allowing me a new start inquiring in a new realm of study. It also provided me with my first opportunity to teach beyond the Hebrew University classrooms. As a member of the Department of History at the Hebrew University and as a fellow of the George L. Mosse Program, I am deeply grateful to the program and the Department of History at UW-Madison and I will be most honored to be of any help to it in the near future.

With best wishes, Diego Holstein

Student Responses to the course “Medieval Iberia: Conflicts and Encounters”.

Taught by Prof. Diego Olstein

Mosse Visiting Exchange Professor, Academic Year 2010

I'd like to thank you, greatly, for your dedication and openness in class. The enthusiasm you encouraged us to maintain in our scrutiny of sources has renewed my interest in medieval history in general. I felt I was challenged to question my assumptions at every turn. As a whole it has been a challenging semester but I am better aware of my tendency to understate my meaning and I will strive be more explicit in my writing.

Thank you so much for everything this semester. I really enjoyed the class. Learning about the process of writing a research paper will be very useful next year while writing my thesis.

I would like to thank you for teaching our class this semester. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to be able to learn more about the history of al-Andalus and appreciate all of your help.

Just wanted to thank you again for a great semester. I'm really glad that I took this class and I got a lot out of it. I'll be sure to send you my other seminar paper (whenever that gets done) that will probably be part of my dissertation. I'll be very interested to hear what you think as a lot of my methodology came directly from your class.

Thanks again for all your advice--it was great getting to know you and taking a class from you!