

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

Reflections on Self-Publishing by Peter Stansky

Members of the Institute might be interested in my recent experience with self-publishing, particularly as some might be considering doing so. It is, in my opinion, far easier and less expensive than one might have thought. The final product is likely to be far better looking than when years ago there was something known by the rather mean name of “vanity publishing,” which tended to produce clunky books. In 1998, I had published *From William Morris to Sergeant Pepper* with the small publishing house, SPOSS, the Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship. I had selected pieces from what I had written over the past 50 years. Last year it occurred to me that I would like to publish a similar collection culled from what I had written, and also some talks I had given, over the past twenty years, to be entitled *Twenty Years On: Views and Reviews of Modern Britain*.

It was extremely unlikely that any trade or university press would be interested in doing such a book. Even if I could succeed in finding a publisher, the search for one and then, if one were interested, the time it would take, particularly if it involved peer review, would be considerable. If by some miracle a publisher had accepted the book, there probably wouldn't be that much publicity for the title by the publisher. The greatest drawback of self-publishing is making the book better known. That can take a lot of work and expense: mailings of cards about the book, ads in the *The New York Review of Books*, alumni magazines, and so forth. I had no intention of doing that. I would be amply satisfied by having the book come into existence even though sales would be minute. Most of the copies distributed would be those that I would give to friends. I did send review copies to the *Journal of British Studies* and *Choice*, but who knows if reviews will appear.

How to go about producing the book? I went through what I had written over the past 20 years and selected those pieces I wished to include. I also considered the texts of talks I had given. One piece I converted into an autobiographical Preface about how I happened to become a historian of modern Britain. I went over my chosen texts, doing some editing and rewriting. I then employed a copy-editor who had copy-edited two of my previous books, and he did invaluable work. (Every book needs a good copy-editor. I can provide his name on request.) He charged \$25 an hour and I ended up paying him about \$1,000. I then employed, at the rate of \$30 an hour, a good friend of mine who has self-published three novels. My bill from her was about \$500. She created the book in consultation with me. She formatted the text—she did no editing—and together we made decisions about the paper to be used, the type, the leading, and so forth. I was very much guided by her experience and opinions. But of course authors vary tremendously about how involved they wish to be about such decisions. As far as I remember I've rarely been consulted by publishers in the past about such choices. In any case I'm generally quite happy to be guided by others.

My friend prepared the manuscript for printing. She also knew how to set that all up with the firm that would create the paperback (as well as doing an e-book). We set what we thought should be the appropriate price. I saw no reason to do a hardback. She also arranged for the ISBN number and sending a copy to the Library of Congress. There were small fees involved. And very importantly she arranged for the cover art through a firm, 99designs. One paid \$399 up-front and provided guidelines of what sort of

– *continued on back page*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

As this newsletter was in preparation, some remarkable US history was being made. On the very same day, January 6, we heard that two Georgia Senators, who were “firsts” in that state, would shift the balance of the Senate from Republican to Democratic and that a far-right mob had stormed the US Capitol. In the days of aftermath, many of us tuned in to news stories far more than usual, trying to make sense of how the country got to this place and where it might be going next. Past history provided some perspective, but “unprecedented” continued to be the byword of our times.

I appreciated that some of you responded to my request for comments “about what today means in American history,” but the variety and length don’t really suit themselves to this column. Interestingly, only one member replied to tihs@googlegroups.com—with some humor I found a welcome interlude.

I would like to encourage all of you to consider sending messages to the group. It could be (and has been at times) a forum for discussion, not just for notifications. You are also “encouraged to post information about events or history-related news you think will be of interest to your fellow members. . . .” The usual guidelines apply to this Google group:

- Be courteous
- Don’t over-post
- Use a descriptive subject line each time
- Postings should be relevant to the study of history

A good ten months have elapsed since Institute groups stopped meeting in person and some of us at least were forced to embrace modern digital technology in the form of Zoom. Our forthcoming Annual Meeting, February 27, will take place via Zoom. It opens at 11 a.m. with reports about each section of Institute activity; the program, beginning around 12.30, will feature new members from 2020 who will introduce themselves and their work. If Zoom is new to you and you’d like some guidance, I can arrange a tutorial – let me know.

As always, remember to tell prospective members about the Institute and direct them to our website—shortcut tihs.org.

– *Ann Harlow*

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The NEWSLETTER is the official publication of the Institute for Historical Study, a scholarly organization designed to promote the research, writing, and public discussion of history. Membership in the Institute is open to independent and academically affiliated scholars who are in agreement with its aims and who have a commitment to historical study. Membership inquiries should be sent to the Institute address.

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THE INSTITUTE is affiliated with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the National Coalition for History (NCH).

MONTHLY PRESENTATION

“The Arc of Our History, 1980-2020: Celebrating the Fortieth Anniversary of the Institute for Historical Study”

*In lieu of an in-person celebration, originally scheduled for May 2020, member **Oliver Pollak** presented an overview of our history via Zoom, on December 20. This virtual gathering included members from California, Alaska, and England as well as guests from Canada and France and officers from the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. Members had already received a 25-page illustrated keepsake (edited by **Ann Harlow**). Below are highlights of Oliver’s remarks. Ed.*

The Institute for Historical Study was born out of the movement of independent scholarship which was becoming a new force in 1970s America. In 1975 an Institute for Research in History had been established in New York, with a paid staff funded by grants. An overproduction of humanities PhDs barred many newly minted academics from university jobs; women particularly suffered. In this growing environment cooperation and maybe even collaboration was replacing competition.

The earliest activities of the formation of the Institute for Historical Study date to 1979, when organizing steps took place. The West Coast Association of Women Historians, established in 1969, provided \$200 in seed money. The Institute attracted untethered, unemployed PhDs, adjuncts, feminists, independent scholars, graduate students, and academics, who saw opportunities outside the ivy walls, as well as retired faculty, archivists, journalists, art, dance, film, and music scholars, novelists, photographers, physicians, playwrights, poets, and other professionals with serious history interests. By the mid-1980s the Institute had 150 members. Today membership hovers around 90.

Study groups over the years formed around many subjects; the History Play Readers has the

longest run, 32 years, though temporarily suspended during the pandemic. Work-in-Progress presentations (numbering about 270) polished conference papers, articles, chapters, and books. Independent scholar Sylvia Harcstark Myers gave the first Work in Progress in January 1981; her book *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* was eventually published by Clarendon Press-Oxford (1990). Member Peter Stansky, Stanford emeritus professor of history, gave the last formal Work in Progress in April 2018 about his writing of a biography of Leonard Woolf (with coauthor Fred Leventhal). Oxford University published *Leonard Woolf: Bloomsbury Socialist* in 2019. In May 2018 “Monthly Presentations,” a broader forum for discussion of members’ interests, replaced the long-lived focus on members’ current work.

In her book’s “Acknowledgments” Sylvia Myers noted the importance of both the Institute for Historical Study and the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Stanford University in stimulating her interest in women writers that highlighted the themes of gratitude, joint effort, and inspiration that run as a thread through the Institute’s 40-year history. Intellectual inspiration was also fostered by comradery at annual meetings and a lively social calendar – picnics (including a history bee), potluck dinners at members’ homes, and for many years a winter banquet. The Institute newsletter kept all members abreast of activities: the President’s Message, announcements of jobs, grants, conferences; meeting summaries, committee reports, reviews of local culture and members’ books (numbering 94); fascinating memoir essays about concentration camps, the Cold War, and travel experiences. Field trips to archives, libraries, museums, monuments, and historic sites broadened our knowledge of resources and local history. Mini-grants offered members modest monetary support to help their

projects to completion or to travel to conferences.

In addition to supporting the scholarship of members, the Institute promoted public engagement with history. The topics were many and film showings, forums, exhibitions were organized by specialists within the membership and cosponsored by various university units, consulates, public libraries. For example: “World War II Documentary Films from Eastern Europe: The Uses of Film in History” in 1981 inaugurated the periodic outreach to general audiences; the exhibit “Views of the French Revolution” commemorated the 200th anniversary of the insurrection at the UC Berkeley Library; in 2007 “Historical Mysteries — Discussion with Three Writers of Historical Mystery Novels” engaged a large and enthusiastic audience.

The Institute encouraged other groups of independent scholars which were forming in other cities to provide a supportive environment for research, writing, and publication outside the academy. In 1989 Georgia Wright and Joanne Lafler helped establish the National Coalition of Independent Scholars; the Institute provided \$300.

Oliver completed his arc of our history by remembering the legacy of some deceased members: **Ilse Sternberger** and her 513-page book, *Princes Without a Home: Modern Zionism and the Strange Fate of Theodore Herzl's Children, 1900-1945* (1994). (Oliver showed a charming image of Ilse with Albert Einstein, taken by Ilse's husband Marcel, a prominent photographer.) **Peter Palmquist** (who was killed in a tragic accident) and his Collection of Women in Photography now at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale; **Masha Zakheim** who “curated the legacy of her father,” Bernard Zakheim, and other San Francisco muralists; **Ellen Huppert** whose home on Willard Street in San Francisco's

Parnassus Heights neighborhood was the site of “decades and hundreds of Institute events”; and **Georgia Wright** whose home was rebuilt after the 1991 Oakland/Berkeley fire “with a room fit for a historian of cathedrals where many Institute events occurred in this grand convivial atmosphere.”

Writers Group

In the last three months of the late and unlamented year 2020 we continued our virtual get-togethers using the wonders of Zoom. Our meetings now span the oceans (or at least the Atlantic) thanks to our newest member, Esther Shalan, who comes to us from London. A philosopher by training, Esther brings new depth and dimension to our discussions.

At our October meeting Cathy Robbins presented a new chapter of “A Torrid Splendor,” her book about Calabria. Earlier sections of her work have been historical, highlighting the troubled past of the region which led so many Calabrese to emigrate. Her current chapter, however, is focused on those who have made the sometimes difficult, even dangerous, decision to stay and fight for the renewal/rebirth of their home region. The group felt that this segment was solid and that, if anything, the emphasis on the contemporary struggle to build Calabria “back better” could be further strengthened. Then in November we read and discussed a chapter of Jim Gasperini's developing book “A Fire in The Mind,” a study of the many ways human beings have imagined fire. This chapter, “Gods Speak through Fire,” discussed theophany, the appearance of the divine in the form of fire. Group members were very enthusiastic about this chapter and felt that it was clearly Jim's best work to date on his project. Finally, in December we read and discussed a section of Esther Shalan's book “God, Good, and Evil.” It dealt with the problem of “systemic evil,” the evils generated

POSTSCRIPT TO A PREVIOUS ARTICLE

by systems like Nazism and Soviet Communism. In this chapter Esther presented a sharp critique of Hannah Arendt's thesis on the "banality of evil" that she made famous in her articles and book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* written in the early 1960s. The group agreed with Esther that the evil generated by men like Eichmann could not be the "banal" product of system-induced "thoughtlessness" (cognitive closure), but always owed much to conscious individual agency. We all look forward to the future discussions that Esther's thought-provoking chapters are sure to produce.

We all anticipate a 2021 with better times and more exciting reading in store.

– *Rob Robbins*

Predatory Journals and a Trojan Horse

Not long after this newsletter published my investigation into a predatory journal to which I'd been invited to contribute,* I received an additional three invitations similar in nature. The first of these came from the London Journals Press, a conglomeration of predatory journals in a wide range of fields. The "Chief Author" issuing the invitation to contribute to an unnamed scientific journal is a professor of analytical chemistry at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Cluj, Romania. I inquired about fees, unmentioned in the website. Yes, he replied, there are fees, but not to worry—I would receive a 30 percent discount on my first two articles. Thirty percent of what? Not to worry, either—I'd pay only \$315 for each. Stipulating a waiver of all fees, I offered my newsletter article about predatory journals for republication. The Chief Author replied: "Sir, you can send the paper whenever it is complete." Then he must have looked at my offering. I heard no more.

Soon after, an invitation arrived from Bentham Science, headquartered in the United Arab Emirates. I could be the Editor of its "major

mega science journal entitled *Social Sciences: Research and Reviews*." All I'd have to do is send my CV; declare which "scientific" field I'd like to edit; and, once accepted, recruit 20 other editors in six months as well as four "eminent scientists" to develop special issues, and . . . well, there's more. Googling "Bentham Science predatory" yields immediate results. I went no further.

Next came Caroline Nichols, assistant managing editor of the *American Journal of Biomedical Science & Research*. Using the ambiguous subject line "Phenomenal Research," she invited me to submit a full article immediately or, if that was too rushed, then a "2-page article [that she hoped] isn't time taken for an eminent Authors [sic] like you." There were obstacles: my ignorance of biomedical science and money (for "a research article [the fee is] \$1479 and for other articles \$1179)." Nichols's use of English suggested that—like many of her website's hundreds of "honorary editors" and "associate editors" from all over the world—she was either not a native speaker or a speaker of a variant of standard Western English. She explained that for financing "we completely depends [sic] on authors [sic] kind contribution only"; her idiomatic use of "only" is common in Indian English. More than half of the main authors of 18 recent articles came from outside mainstream academia. I don't mean to imply that research outside the mainstream is less worthy or that other Englishes are defective, but merely that predatory journals typically entice poorly funded scholars from such countries.

Still, the *American Journal of Biomedical Science & Research* was listed in major indexes, and while I was incompetent to judge the articles, some appeared to be authentic. I wrote to an author who had published extensively in mainstream journals to ask why she had chosen to publish in this one. She confirmed my supposition that her article would provoke controversy. Indeed, she said, none of the

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journals in which she usually published would take it, and she wanted to get her ideas out into the community. The journal's fees, she said, were well below most charges in science journals—a shocker for someone like me who'd never paid a fee.

The likely source of these invitations is ResearchGate, an organization that I joined while researching my previous article. Ever since, I've received regular reports of my "achievements"; these include recent citations of articles that ResearchGate had uploaded (without my knowledge) by crawling the internet. My "score is higher than 47.5% of all ResearchGate members' scores," and its stats give "better insights into scientists' interest" in my research. But why would scientists be interested in my work? Unsurprisingly, scholars have cast doubts about the ethics of Research Gate.** ResearchGate, it seems, can be a Trojan horse packed with predatory journals.

*<https://instituteforhistoricalstudy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Summer-2020.pdf>, pp. 1, 10

** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ResearchGate>

– *Carol Sicherman*

In Memoriam: Ross Maxwell

In December the Institute lost a devoted longtime member. **Ross Maxwell** served on the Institute board, attended numerous meetings and events, participated in the play readers group, and presented his work periodically. He also gave papers at numerous conferences. In his most important monthly presentation Ross introduced Institute members to a relatively new form of scholarly endeavor, Big History. The scope of Big History is awesome: 13.8 billion years. From the creation of the universe—the "Big Bang"—to our own time. Big History is interdisciplinary, drawing upon the work of scholars in many fields, from cosmology to geology, the social sciences, history, etc. David Christian, a "founding father" of Big History, is

an Oxford-educated professor of Russian history at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Walter Alvarez, of UC Berkeley, is a professor of earth and planetary science.

Ross devoted considerable time to a discussion of the organizing principle of Big History: eight historical thresholds and the increasingly complex circumstances that led to significant change over the millennia. I was delighted by the use of the term the "Goldilocks principle" as a way of signifying that circumstances must be "just right" in order for a new threshold to be achieved. For those who wished to learn more, Ross recommended several books with intriguing titles: David Christian's *Origin Story—A Big History of Everything*; *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, and Steven Weinberg's *The First Three Minutes: A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe*. Ross's own work was inspired by his interest in history and social science.

It was a pleasure to share monthly meetings of the play readers with Ross and his wife Phyllis (also an Institute member), reading aloud and discussing works set in a dizzying assortment of historical times and places. Ross and Phyllis enjoyed hosting those meetings. Our most recent session was at their home. My last memory is of a warm and kindly host.

– *Joanne Lafler*

George Piness, Husband of Edith

The members of the Institute offer heartfelt condolences to long-time member Edith (Edee) Piness, whose husband George passed away suddenly on 8 December. George, a World War II Navy veteran earned degrees in engineering at MIT in 1949 and 1950. They married soon after Edee graduated from Wellesley, 70 years ago. Partnership with George not only produced three children but two graduate degrees (MA and PhD at Claremont Graduate University) and a full career as a historian and dedicated board

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member for many years of the California Missions Board Foundation, San Francisco Historical Society, IHS, and other organizations. Together they were active philanthropists and world travelers. George accompanied Edee to many Institute gatherings, likely attending more meetings than many Institute members, and graciously hosted presentations in their Marin County home.

Bonda Lewis reports: “On February 21, **Liz Thacker** and I are going to do a Zoom format Work in Progress for the Institute, using the occasion as a dress rehearsal for a San Francisco Public Library show that we are doing in March (no date yet for this one). February 15, 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the presentation to Congress of the Adelaide Johnson sculpture of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan Brownell Anthony to the American people and Congress. I’ve known that for a hundred years (an exaggeration)—but have never come across the speech that was given that day by Sara Bard Field. Brilliant Liz found it! It was in the Bancroft Library. So I am editing it for performance, and Liz has created a lovely informative Power Point presentation to explain it. We have hopes of our presentation being interesting, informative, and unexpected.”

Bert Gordon, emeritus professor of history at Mills College, presented a talk in September, “Monuments, Memory, and Tourism,” for an online meeting of the University of California Berkeley’s Tourism Studies Working Group. He also published an essay in honor of his Ph.D. faculty advisor, “Professor Robert A. Kann: Historian, Scholar, Mentor,” published in the *Austrian Studies Newsmagazine*, 32:2 (Fall 2020), and also online by the University of Minnesota’s Center for Austrian Studies.* During the spring quarter 2021 he will teach an online course, “French History from the 1789 Revolution to the Present,” for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Santa Clara

University. * <https://cla.umn.edu/austrian/news-events/announcement/cas-exclusive-professor-robert-kann-historian-scholar-mentor>

Ann Harlow launched an online exhibit for the Berkeley Historical Society, “Berkeley’s Fascination with Food” in November.* She has also been working on publications for the Society, including new Institute member Stephen Barton’s biography of J. Stitt Wilson. And she’s convening a community group to develop a vision for a future museum in Berkeley’s historic landmark former city hall. * exhibitsbhs.org

Ernest Hook reports that he has finished a paper, “The Evolution of Therapeutic Bloodletting for the treatment of Pneumonia in William Osler’s Textbook of Medicine: 1892-1947,” for an edited collection of papers (*The Persisting Osler V*) presented in the 2010-2019 decade at the American Osler Society, a group devoted to the study of history of medicine. “Surprisingly, long after other textbooks of medicine had dropped endorsement of bloodletting for pneumonia,” Ernest reports, “the successive editors of Osler’s textbook continued to recommend it, albeit with lesser enthusiasm.”

Leslie Friedman’s new book, *The Story of Our Butterflies: Mourning Cloaks in Mountain View*, is published and available.* Leslie and her husband, the photographer Jonathan Clark, observed a butterfly laying eggs on a twig in their pussy willow tree, took the twig and eggs inside to protect them, nurtured the caterpillars through all stages of development, and released about 125 butterflies into nature preserves. The book examines scientific descriptions of butterflies, historical and cultural aspects of butterflies—in Chinese legends, American pop music, Mozart, Puccini, and Shakespeare. The story of the Monterey monarchs, now near extinction, is a California drama.

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Butterflies are at the center of international political-economic struggles. The wall being built on the US southern border cuts through the National Butterfly Center in Mission, Texas, endangering butterfly and other species' existence. The Center and conservation organizations won an injunction against the wall; the Supreme Court overturned the injunction. In Mexico, there have been multiple murders of defenders of the Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Millions of monarchs migrate there, but the trees they seek are gone. Despite this, the book shows butterflies symbolize hope to many cultures and individuals. *<http://www.livelyfoundation.org/wordpress/?p=3477>

"The Curtain," the last act of **Leslie Friedman's** satirical play, "The Arts Community," was presented as a one-act, read over Zoom, November 12, by the Play Café (located in Berkeley). In *The Curtain*, a young actor seeks advice and help from an older one. The dying elder, apparently little help to the young one, gets renewed energy through memories of performances and tours. Maybe the young one notices; maybe not.

"Just Vote," **Judith (Jody) Offer's** latest play enjoyed a live reading by professional Masquers' Theatre actors on December 1. "In fact," Jody writes, "Masquers used the play about Susan B. Anthony for their 'Giving Tuesday' fundraiser (and raised more than the sum hoped for). Institute members who would like to know more about the real Susan B. Anthony (as opposed to the one portrayed by contemporary anti-suffragist newspapers) can check out this portrayal of the occasion Miss Anthony actually voted and the subsequent results.* As a result of this reading, I rewrote the Frederick Douglass scene extensively and added one new scene. I had a wonderful time actually rehearsing again; the actors were dedicated and highly competent. This was

especially satisfactory, because Masquers will produce 'Compared to What?' as soon as they can reopen." * https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsK__eV0Yj4&feature=youtu.be&t=24021

Hoping to garner attention and sales of his latest book, *The Contract*, in which he explores the theme that young women have a contract with their grandmothers to carry on the fight for equality with men, **Steven Levi** made available 200 copies "to young women who send a self-addressed, 5 ½ by 8 ½ envelope with \$1.60 in postage to the Alaska Historical Publication Association . . ." The response: "from Alaskans, no good. Barely a handful. But I have sent out about 20 nationwide."

Reading the online edition of the *Nation*, Kenya's leading newspaper, **Carol Sicherman** was startled by a fictitious account of her conversations with a member of the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi decades ago. The author, chair of the department when she spoke with him, cast her as a Western academic who had asked him to work for her "for free" – rather as British colonial authorities had forced their unwilling subjects to build roads and dig ditches for free. Having saved her notes of her conversations in 1987 and 1995, she wrote a corrective essay that appeared the following week in the *Nation* together with a response by a Kenyan that criticized other elements of the offending article. The Twittersphere, she heard, was delighted by these put-downs of an antagonist of the leading Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (the subject of much of Carol's research). Her adversary replied two weeks later, in a McCarthyite attack on Carol as a liar from Trump country. In her reply, published a week later, she declared an end to the battle.

BOOK REVIEW

Twenty Years On

By Peter Stansky (Pinehill Humanities Press, 2020)

This is a delightful book. Stansky's felicitous style allows him to write profound observations which never hit the reader like a blow on the head. Instead, one feels historical memory and imagination light up as connections such as those between architecture in California and the Arts and Crafts movement in 19th-century England become clear. The book is a collection of essays and lectures Stansky has presented over the past twenty years. His field is modern British history focusing on the intersection of political, social, cultural, and artistic history and where each defined area influences and modifies the others.

The essays' subjects were the interests of his books: the Arts and Crafts Movement, especially William Morris; George Orwell; Bloomsbury; writers and artists of the 1930s, especially concepts of boundaries and frontiers; World War II, especially Churchill and the London Blitz; what it means to be English. There is a contemporary subject: history over television. How does history fare when the need for drama is nearly as important as accuracy?

The book is entertaining, informative, and learned. This reader's favorite is the Preface in which Stansky tells how he decided to be an historian and why of England. (I will not divulge details best enjoyed directly.) Reading these essays does not replace reading the books, but it reveals the germs of ideas that propel the books. Provocative ideas in one subject suggest relationships with ideas in other chapters of life as well as of history.

Stansky wrote two books on Orwell with the late writer and editor, William Abrahams: *The Unknown Orwell* (1972) and *Orwell: The Transformation* (1979). Turn to Orwell's

writing to correct notions of "alternative facts" and "fake news." One thinks the blight corroding truth is easily recognized; then falls into an enthusiasm created by Big Brother. *Orwell's Homage to Catalonia*, about his time in the Spanish Civil War, is proof. Which side has the good guys? Hard to tell.

Stansky shows that Orwell himself saw political confusion and aggression amongst socialist and communist parties. Spain led Orwell to the political direction of his life. He became committed to Democratic Socialism, "as I understand it," and opposed totalitarianism.

Bloomsbury writers and visual artists seem light-hearted after Orwell, despite premature deaths in the Spanish Civil War and Virginia Woolf's suicide lying ahead. Stansky presents the vision behind these artists' works: the world is not what it seems. He points out that major thinkers in the same time period, Einstein, Freud, and, in an earlier time, Marx, demonstrated that through physics, psychology, social-economic theory. They changed the way one could perceive the world. Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness writing reveals lives not by appearance but in progress.

According to Stansky, history must tell the story of what happened and also explain the story's "significance." He does that in studies of the London Blitz and Churchill, that stout, determined Englishman who saved the world. Was it a time of mythic heroism or of "panic and fear"? These contradictory views show Stansky a truth about the English. During the Blitz, they were encouraged to stay calm. Keeping on was the victory. There was bad behavior and terror, but they won by waiting. Then, Hitler took his planes and went East.

– Leslie Friedman

cover one wished. I wanted it to be parallel to the jacket for my earlier collection. The design would include the spine and the back cover, including whatever text about the book and the author one might wish to have on it. The firm sends the specifications out to designers on their list and we received 20 submissions. We narrowed the list to three and made some comments about their designs. They resubmitted and we selected the one we liked best. My helper also arranged for the book to be available for sale from nine websites, including Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

From copies that have been sold I've received some minute royalties. Bookstores can purchase the book wholesale from Ingram. I bought 50 copies myself, some of which I sent to friends and family and others I will give to friends when I have a chance to see them again. (I am writing this while we are still in lockdown.) The more copies one buys the lower the price per copy. Of course I was very lucky to know someone who could take on book production. Others are probably more competent than I and could do it themselves. Indeed my friend might be willing to produce a book for others and I would be happy to provide her name. The experience was painless.

Whatever the quality of the contents, I am very pleased with the physical book. It is a collection of pieces written over a range of modern British topics, although with a preponderance of essays on William Morris, the Bloomsbury Group, and George Orwell. Those with manuscripts more narrowly focused might well be able to send notice of their book to those specifically interested. Self-publishing is likely to do little to advance one's career, but at this late point in my life that is not one of my concerns. Please be in touch with me (stansky@stanford.edu) if you have any questions I might be able to answer.

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