

University of York graduate Peter Hitchens wins Orwell prize for foreign correspondence



By [Kate Goligher](#), Politics Editor (2009/10)
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Peter Hitchens has attracted criticism for his right-wing views, Image: Flickr

University of York graduate and national columnist, Peter Hitchens, has won the prestigious Orwell Prize. Hitchens won the prize for his foreign correspondence in the Mail on Sunday.

His winning articles include pieces on the European Union, Afghanistan and an article questioning the ramifications of a hypothetical history in which the Berlin Wall had never fallen.

Hitchens was nominated for the prize previously in 2007 and 2009, but failed to win the prize on both occasions.

The Orwell Prize, which was established in 1993 by Bernard Crick, is regarded as the pre-eminent British prize for political writing.

Winners are those which are said to come closest to matching Orwell's goal of "making political writing an art". In addition to a category for journalism there is a book prize and a blog prize.

The award-winner gained much praise for his precise and strong style. Peter Keller, one of the judges remarked that Hitchen's work was "as firm, polished and potentially lethal as a Guardsman's boot."

Hitchens writes mainly on politics and current affairs and has attracted criticism from other journalists for his right-wing viewpoint. Upon winning the prize he remarked that "they'll hate me even more for this." Hitchens' win was a surprise to many due to his right-wing leanings, a sharp contrast to that of George Orwell.

In 1977 Hitchens joined the Labour Party; however he subsequently left, and later joined the Conservative Party. Hitchens currently regards himself as politically independent and believes that no party represents his viewpoint.

Hitchens studied Politics at the University of York from 1970-73. Upon graduating he pursued a career in journalism, joining The Daily Express in 1977. He remained at the Express until 2001 when he resigned

stating that the new owner, Richard Desmond, had a style that was incompatible with his own. He joined the Mail on Sunday where he writes a weekly column and a blog.

Hitchens has written for other newspapers including The Times and makes regular television appearances as a panellist on the BBC's Question Time and Daily Politics show, as well making occasional documentaries for Channel 4.

The other winners of the prize this year were Andrea Gillies for her book Keeper and Winston Smith for his blog, 'Working With the Underclass'.



3 comments

A friend of Yorks

25 May '10 at 8:02 pm

I laughed heartily that 'Winston Smith' was referred to by the author of this article without his name being put in inverted commas and question the substance of Hitchens receiving 'criticism' for 'right-wing views' which is about as flimsy an attack upon a person's particular political positions as can be. In fact, George Orwell himself probably wouldn't have thought about it.

May I recommend that whoever wrote this actually read some Orwell, perhaps starting with his essay 'Politics and the English Language', forthwith.

[Report](#)

Jeremy Bonington-Jagworth

3 Nov '17 at 2:22 pm

The writer seems to have overlooked Trotskyite Hitchens Minor's six(?) years' membership of the Socialist Workers Party.

He only left the Labour Party so that he wouldn't be seen as biased when he became a political correspondent

The author also seems to have overlooked the fact that if he graduated in 1973 you can't go on to claim "Upon graduating he pursued a career in journalism, joining The Daily Express in 1977".

Where was he in the missing 4 years?

Was it Pravda, or only the Morning Star?!?!

And, strangely, if you try to post a counter argument to his blogs that contains irrefutable facts it will disappear into cyberspace never to be seen again.

They trained him well!!!

[Report](#)

Peter Hitchens

29 Sep '18 at 5:28 pm

In the 'missing four years' I was working as an indentured apprentice and junior reporter at the Swindon Evening Advertiser (1973-76), and then as Industrial Reporter of the Coventry Evening Telegraph (1976). I never belonged to the 'Socialist Workers' Party'. I belonged, from 1968 to 1975, to the International Socialists, who proclaimed themselves to be the 'SWP' after I had left.

. When I belonged, we were never crazy enough to think that 3,000, OK maybe 4,000 students could be called a 'Party'. My blog publishes all coherent comments submitted to it, though there are some small rules, including reasonable limits on how long they can be. Mr 'Jagworth' may have run up against these

rules and mistaken them for censorship.

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