

SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED: THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR BOOKS 2018

EMBARGOED UNTIL 19.15 BST FRIDAY 18th MAY 2018

The shortlist for **The Orwell Prize for Books 2018, Britain's most prestigious prize for political writing**, announced tonight at **The Bath Festival** during The Orwell Prize Debate featuring this year's chair of judges, **Andrew Adonis**.

- The Orwell Prize judges choose six of the most compelling examples of political writing of 2017. The Orwell Prize is Britain's most prestigious prize for political writing. Prizes are awarded each year to the book and journalism which come closest to George Orwell's ambition to 'make political writing into an art'.
- Topics ranged from immigration to gender studies, Russia's history and examinations of modern Islam. The shortlist includes Darren McGarvey's *Poverty Safari*, a book casting light on the lives of the most deprived and Ali Smith's political allegory, *Winter*.
- Judge Lorien Kite said of the shortlist: 'Brexit, immigration, revolution, gender, poverty, the Middle East - the dominant themes were always clear but so too was the range of approaches deployed by this year's Orwell Prize entries. History, fiction, memoir and science are all represented in our shortlist, six titles that succeed in quite different ways and together illustrate the vigour and variety of political writing in our tumultuous times.'

The 2018 shortlist is:

***The Islamic Enlightenment: The Modern Struggle Between Faith and Reason*, Christopher de Bellaigue** (Bodley Head) An absorbing account of the political and social reformations that transformed the lands of Islam in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

***Testosterone Rex*, Cordelia Fine** (Icon Books) A book explaining why past and present sex roles are only serving suggestions for the future. It reveals a much more dynamic situation through an entertaining and well-documented exploration of the latest research that draws on evolutionary science, psychology, neuroscience, endocrinology, and philosophy.

***What You Did Not Tell*, Mark Mazower** (Allen Lane) In the centenary of the Russian Revolution, *What You Did Not Tell* recounts a brand of socialism erased from memory - humanistic, impassioned, and broad-ranging in its sympathies. But it also explores the unexpected happiness that may await history's losers, the power of friendship, and the love of place.

***Poverty Safari*, Darren McGarvey** (Luath Press Ltd) People from deprived communities all across Britain feel misunderstood and unheard. Darren McGarvey, aka Loki, gives voice to their feelings and concerns, and anger that is spilling over.

***Winter*, Ali Smith** (Hamish Hamilton) In the second novel in her Seasonal cycle, Smith's shape-shifting quartet of novels casts a merry eye over a bleak post-truth era with a story rooted in history, memory and warmth, its taproot deep in the evergreens: art, love, laughter.

***Lovers and Strangers: An Immigrant History of Post-War Britain*, Clair Wills** (Allen Lane) Clair Wills' book brings to life the incredible diversity and strangeness of the migrant experience. She introduces us to lovers, scroungers, dancers, homeowners, teachers, drinkers, carers and

many more to show the opportunities and excitement as much as the humiliation and poverty that could be part of the new arrivals' experience.

The judges for The Orwell Prize for Books are politician, academic and journalist **Andrew Adonis** (Chair), Literary Journalist and Artistic Director of Words and Literature of the Bath Festival **Alex Clark**, novelist **Kit de Waal**, and Deputy Life & Arts Editor for the Financial Times **Lorien Kite**.

The winner of each prize receives £3000. Previous winners of The Orwell Prize for Books include Arkady Ostrovsky (2016), Raja Shehadeh (2008), Alan Johnson (2014) and Andrea Gillies (2010).

Shortlists for The Orwell Prize for Journalism and The Orwell Prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils are also announced on 18th May. The winners of all three prizes will be announced at an event on 25th June, Orwell's Birthday, at The RSA.

For further information, please see www.orwellfoundation.com, on Twitter [@TheOrwellPrize](https://twitter.com/TheOrwellPrize) or contact Robyn Donaldson at robyn.donaldson@theorwellprize.co.uk or on 020 3108 1618.

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Notes to Editors (see below)

1. The Orwell Prize is Britain's most prestigious prize for political writing. Every year, three prizes are awarded to the work which comes closest to George Orwell's ambition 'to make political writing into an art': the Orwell Prize for Books, Journalism and Exposing Britain's Social Evils.
2. The Orwell Prize is awarded by the Orwell Foundation, a registered charity (number 1161563) providing free cultural events and resources for the public benefit.
3. The Prize was founded by the late Professor Sir Bernard Crick in its present form in 1993, awarding its first prizes in 1994. The Prize is supported by Political Quarterly, Richard Blair (George Orwell's son) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
4. The Orwell Foundation is based at UCL's Institute of Advanced Studies. For more information about the Institute of Advanced Studies and its activities please visit <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/institute-of-advanced-studies>
5. The Orwell Prize for Books 2018 is for a political book or pamphlet, fiction or non-fiction, published in the calendar year 2016. 'Political' is defined in the broadest sense, including (but not limited to) entries addressing political, social, cultural, moral and historical subjects. The Orwell Prize does not accept poetry, or works in translation. For full details and rules of entry please see our [website](#).
6. The Orwell Prize for Books received 276 entries for the Orwell Prize for Books 2018, a twenty percent increase on 2017. The Orwell Prize for Books 2017 longlist consisted of twelve books and can be found on our [website](#).
7. The winner receives £3000 and a trophy designed and made by students at Goldsmiths, University of London.