

7 February 1972

Lord Hardinge of Penshurst,
Macmillan International Ltd.,
Little Essex Street,
London W.C. 2.

Dear George,

Many thanks for your letter to David Holloway. It seems a perfect answer. There is only one point which slightly worried me which is your statement that the French book trade manages to keep up with the situation (Prix Goncourt). It is claimed by many journalists who go over there at the time that there is in fact total chaos, and the book trade more or less comes to a grinding halt during the Prize season. This may be an exaggeration, but I have heard it said by some. I guess our "comfort" is that British phlegm would prevent this happening here, alas?

I am very sorry I was unable to enlighten you at the meeting, but even after the piece in the Times diary on Saturday, I am still not really sure of what is happening, except that the prize will be administered from the NBL.