



The National Book League

7 Albemarle Street  
London W1X 4BB  
01-493 9001

Date

EMBARGOED UNTIL 9.0 p.m. ON THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 1972

We would be grateful if all journalists would make this a verbal embargo until the announcement is made officially at the Cafe Royal on Thursday, when the Rt. Hon. Roy Jenkins, M.P. will present the prize, so that the surprise element will be as great as possible.

BOOKER PRIZE 1972

The winner of the fourth £5,000 Booker Prize for fiction is John Berger for his novel G (Weidenfeld & Nicolson). This announcement was made by Cyril Connolly on the evening of 23 November at the Cafe Royal at a dinner to celebrate the event, when the Rt. Hon. Roy Jenkins presented the £5,000 cheque and Booker Trophy to Mr Berger.

Some fifty novels were considered by the judges, Cyril Connolly (Chairman) Elizabeth Bowen and George Steiner, who released a short list of four contenders, a month ago:

- G by John Berger (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)
- The Bird of Night by Susan Hill (Hamish Hamilton)
- The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith by Thomas Keneally (Angus & Robertson)
- Pasmore by David Storey (Longman)

Cyril Connolly on behalf of the Judges says:

'At first a deadlock seemed imminent with The Bird of Night as everybody's second choice. Then two judges came out strongly for the winner and the third acquiesced though not quite so strongly. The verdict was unanimous.

'John Berger's G appealed to us all by virtue of its humanity and intellectual distinction, its grasp of modern history and sympathy with the oppressed. Limpidity as well as originality is what we found, The book flows onward like a river, but the drama gathers too; the story of a bastard, son of an Italian industrialist and a spoilt Anglo-American mother who grows up with a resentment against the over-privileged and a longing to assert his identity through physical passion. It is a philosophical novel in which the class struggle from 1848-1914 is envisaged through private emotions and it took John Berger (better known as an art-historian) five years to write which we think was worth it.'

The Booker Prize is sponsored jointly by the Publishers Association and Booker-McConnell Ltd and administered by the National Book League. Please see over for biographical details of John Berger and for further information and photographs please contact:

Marilyn Edwards  
The National Book League  
Telephone: 01 493 9001 or  
01 499 1805

Contact:

Director:  
Martyn Goff FIAL

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John Berger was born in London in 1926 and studied at the Central and Chelsea Schools of Art. He started his life as a painter and teacher of drawing. He was a regular contributor of art criticism for the Tribune and a regular art critic for the New Statesman, he also has written for many other national newspapers and journals. He now writes regularly for New Society. His published works include Permanent Red (essays) (1960), Success & Failure of Picasso (1965), Art & Revolution, Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the USSR (1969), A Fortunate Man (essay) (1967), and his novels A Painter in Our Time (1958), The Foot of Clive (1962) and Corker's Freedom (1964)