

familiar old product: apologetics for the capitalist system. However, some of the techniques of presentation could be used by the progressive movement for quite different ends.

L.S.

The Strike in the American Novel

Fay M. Blake

Scarecrow Press (New Jersey), 296 pp., available on order from Collett's

THE AUTHOR SETS OUT to trace the use of 'the strike' in the American novel from 1870 to 1945. She does this well and in doing it has accomplished something additional and equally important. The book is a comprehensive study of the relationship of the artist to the prevailing social conditions in which he lived, and the effect this imposed on the treatment of strikes.

The author shows that, from the period of the industrial revolution in America up to about 1930, novelists used the strike as a handy vehicle to peddle their own particular brand of anti-working class bias or ignorance. Notable exceptions were Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and Jack London's *The Iron Heel*; interestingly, she points out that Jack London was the only one writing about the working class who was, himself, a worker. 'Very often, however, the attitudes which become apparent in the novels reflect unconscious fears or prejudices. There is a wide divergence between fact and fiction in these novels. The strikes in the novels all became uncontrolled riots accompanied by death and violence. Most real strikes of the time were dreary, undramatic rounds of meetings, picket lines and compromise agreements. The strikes in the novels are, almost without exception, lost. Most strikes of the time succeeded' (p. 40).

When the author reaches the period

1930-45, she makes an interesting observation on the twin phenomena of the great depression and the rise of fascism in Europe. They pervaded the life and literature of the decade—'gave birth to a new genre in literature,' namely the 'strike novel', novels about strikes as distinct from the use of a strike merely to create a dramatic incident. In the section on this period she deals with the divergence of opinion among left-wing writers and critics as to what constituted the 'proletarian novel'. Was it merely any novel that dealt with the working class or was it the novels which sympathised and identified with the ultimate triumph of the working class and socialism?

The 100 pages of annotated bibliography give a brief but pungent comment on over 200 novels. This alone is worth having on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the history of working class literature.

CHARLIE DOYLE

Fischer v. Spassky: Reykjavik 1972

C. H. O'D. Alexander

Penguin, 144 pp., £1

THE PUBLICITY and glamour of the match for the world chess title has attracted world-wide attention. This is undoubtedly the best account of the match for the average player and even for those with little or no knowledge of the game. The book by grandmaster Gligoric at half the price may provide more learned annotations, but this book, resplendent with many photographs, not only gives useful comments on the moves and the results, but also a full account of the history of the championship and the day-to-day course of the recent sensational encounter, and even a full explanation how games between masters are conducted.

CLEMENS DUTT

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