

YEARBOOK ON INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST AFFAIRS 1977

edited by Richard F. Staar et al.
Hoover, 1977, 612 pp. \$30
L of C 76-51879
ISBN 0-8179-6701-X

The eleventh volume in a series, this edition surveys Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations throughout the world in 1976 and provides profiles of their activities in 93 countries. An 8-page essay on the United States gives details on the Communist Party USA, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Progressive Labor Party, together with some information on several Maoist sects, although not on the new Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) founded in June 1977 to attack revisionism and carry on Mao Tse-tung's thought. Other features include a long article on the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in Europe, held in Berlin in 1976, and a valuable bibliography.

Arts & Letters

RUBENS IN ITALY

by Michael Jaffé
Cornell, 1977, 128 pp. \$55
L of C 76-20065
ISBN 0-8014-1064-9

One day in 1600, Peter Paul Rubens, aged 23, left his native Flanders for Italy. Eight years later, in a desperate and fruitless attempt to reach his mother's deathbed, he returned home—and never went south of the Alps again. This account of Rubens' Italian years, by a Cambridge professor of art history, is an inspiring Painter's Progress—a tale of talent, helped by hard work, again and again assisted by luck. With impeccable scholarship and telling detail, Jaffé demonstrates in text and 346 well-chosen illustrations the impact of those early years on Rubens' later paintings. So convincing is the commentary that it makes one wonder how so many people, specialists or laymen, can continue to insist that this painter was only, or essentially, "Flemish": he, whom many knew in his Italian Spring as Pier Paolo Rubens.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHAUCER

by John Gardner
Knopf, 1977, 352 pp. \$12.50
L of C 76-1915
ISBN 0-394-49317-6

Courtier, diplomat, squire, and poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) lived in the thick of English politics. His friends included patron and brother-in-law John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster and Steward of England in Richard II's early reign); his acquaintances, the enigmatic Black Prince (Edward) and the tragic Richard II himself. John Gardner (author of *Nickel Mountain* and many other