

GOD'S SECRET ARMIES. By Joseph Johnston. (Museum Press; 12s. 6d.)

It is an open secret that forces of believers are fighting militant atheism in Russia and the satellite countries. During Holy Year, Mr Johnston, an American journalist, accompanied a pilgrimage to Rome. It was then that he 'stumbled on the trail of the secret armies through the chance remark of a Jesuit priest that certain of his order were engaged in what he termed "the Russian work".' His keen journalistic sense made him realize that here was a possible story of world-wide interest. He had, inevitably, to go carefully for imprudent talk would endanger the lives of innocent people.

At first Mr Johnston received little encouragement, but after three years of persistent and meticulous investigation and the interviewing of more than sixty people intimately connected with the secret armies, he was able to break his self-imposed silence and tell the story of this courageous work. Even so, there had to be an element of cloak-and-dagger because the identity of many of the people involved must be kept secret. Others beside Christians are taking part in the heroic struggle to restore God's kingdom in Russia. Jews are making a notable contribution. The Moslems, too, are sharing in this secret holy war.

The author tells many dramatic and moving stories of the heroism of the intrepid leaders of the secret armies. He is confident, in the light of his painstaking investigations, that the secret army will be victorious in God's name and in 'God's moment'.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS. By Raymond A. Lane. (Peter Davies; 15s.)

It was one Sunday night in Seoul that I first made the acquaintance of Bishop Patrick Byrne. Mgr George Carroll, superior of the Maryknoll Fathers in Korea and representative of the American Catholic War Relief Services, had come along to the Columban Fathers' mission house where I was staying, bringing for my especial benefit a cinematograph projector and some rolls of film he had taken several years earlier.

Alone in a darkened room I sat for perhaps some ten minutes viewing scenes and episodes which were frankly of the type most likely to interest the person who took them. Then suddenly a smiling priest came into the picture. Shortly after there came a succession of shots of his consecration by Bishop Ro of Seoul. It was Bishop 'Pat' Byrne, 'the Bishop with the light touch' of whom I had heard so often since my arrival in Korea.

It was easy to see how he had come to earn that title. On his face there was a permanent and kindly, slightly quizzical smile which from

time to time broke into a broad grin. Most of the time he looked as though he must be enjoying some private joke, possibly a leg-pull. His face radiated intelligence, good humour and a lot of sheer goodness.

By the time I saw the film, however, Bishop Byrne, Apostolic Delegate in Korea, had already been dead some four years. He had died a martyr's death whilst he was a captive of the North Korean Communists, somewhere on the banks of the cold Yalu river, up against the Manchurian border.

Ambassador in Chains is his life-story written by the Superior General of Maryknoll, the American missionary society of which he was so prominent a member. That the writing of this book was a labour of love is clear throughout. And well it might be, since Patrick Byrne, according to all who knew him, was from his earliest seminary days a lovable man with a sunny disposition.

Since he joined Maryknoll within two years of its formation the early, rather quiet chapters of this book are in part the story of the first days of the society too, and some sections here will be of greater interest to those within the Maryknoll family than to those outside. Apart from some five years as mission-superior in Korea, it was at Maryknoll, in teaching and administrative posts, that the greater part of Fr Byrne's early priestly life was spent.

It was in 1935, when the war clouds were already gathering, that he returned to the East, this time to Japan, the very heart of the Eastern trouble area. There he remained not only until war came, but throughout the war too. When the Japanese war lords were already beaten but refused to sue for peace, Fr Byrne was brought out of house arrest by a Japanese peace party to broadcast the fact of their defeat to the people. This brought him prominence both in Japan and America, where he became known as 'Japan's Number Two American'. 'Number One' was General MacArthur himself. And indeed, when the General was under attack, Fr Byrne came out, in the columns of United States papers, in his defence. During this period he was probably open to the charge of being a 'political cleric'.

In 1949 he returned to Korea, this time as the Holy See's representative to the new South Korean republic. When the Communists invaded from the North he was quickly arrested. From then until his death he suffered enormously but with characteristic cheerfulness. With a mixed group of missionary priests, nuns, diplomats, G.I. prisoners-of-war and others he endured the now notorious Death March. He was a sick man before that inhuman march, on which men died by the score and on which those who lagged behind were executed on the spot, began. By the time it ended he was horribly, disgustingly ill, filthy with neglected dysentery but still wise-cracking

about it all. Just before his death he told the heroic Mgr Thomas Quinlan, who was his companion on the march: 'It has always been my hope to give my life for our Faith. The good Lord has given me this privilege.'

So it is that, because of the nature of Bishop Byrne's life and death, this book which begins so quietly becomes one which must surely be an inspiration to all who read it. Today, because of the men who, like him, died there for the Faith, Korea is a land of enormous opportunity for the Church. They did not die in vain.

DOUGLAS HYDE

POLICY FOR THE WEST. By Ion Ratiu. (Harvill Press; 16s.)

This is a book worth reading. Perhaps when it is read the reader may not agree with the positive ideas of the author, yet he will probably be sufficiently stirred to agree that some positive ideas are needed unless the West is to lose the battle against Communism.

The argument of the book is simple. On one side there stands the giant Communist bloc, an evil thing yet possessing many advantages coming from its size, its unity and its disregard for moral standards in debate. On the other there stands the free world, representing something noble in the way of life but divided and disorganized, leaderless and policyless. On the side of the battlefield stand the uncommitted worlds of Asia and Africa.

The Communist tactic is not to engage in direct battle with the West but to tackle the uncommitted lands. In the fight for Asia and Africa Communism is winning and as soon as this battle is over the West will be outflanked and cannot avoid destruction.

Even if some would suggest that this picture is too gloomy there is enough truth in it to worry us all. But what can be done? Mr Ratiu has a full programme to offer us.

Part of it is emotional—yet still necessary. We must rally all democrats and give them a sense of direction. It is easy to give them a negative sense of being anti-communist in policy. But what is the positive sense they need?

Mr Ratiu proposes a World Council of Democracy to attend to this problem, to make it clear to the world that the benefits of democracy can be made available to all nations, and to canalize the efforts of the West to help in the development of backward areas.

Whatever one may think of some of the proposals outlined, Mr Ratiu is correct to lay so much stress on nationalism. We in the West must stop being imperialistic. The outraged citizen of the West may well reply that such an accusation belongs to yesterday and is not true today: yet a good many of the people of Asia see us as still imperialistic;