

further, however: They identify many prison situations where inner strength actually influenced "events which appear to be innocent of man." From this they conclude—a belief Mihajlov shares—that if man follows his inner voice (faith), a mysterious force (God) will shape the external events in his life. Moreover, Mihajlov observes, the existential problem posed by oppression is not unique to that situation: Those who may never face the prospect of arrest and imprisonment must nevertheless confront sickness, tragedy, and, ultimately, death. They cannot avoid the spiritual choice that confronted Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich, who was forced to prepare for death before he had learned how to live.

The political bent of Solzhenitsyn's *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* jolted Mihajlov, who had identified closely with the *Gulag* author's religious views. Mihajlov rejects Solzhenitsyn's authoritarianism, reasoning that "Solzhenitsyn is verily The Great Witness, but it was not his destiny to comprehend the meaning of his own experience."

For Mihajlov religion and democracy are linked: Those who believe in democracy are religious people, "whether they are aware of it or not, and no matter what they consider themselves to be." He observes that Solzhenitsyn, a Christian and a religious man, "is fighting for an anti-Christian, authoritarian system, while the [atheistic] scientist Sakharov is voicing his support for a Christian social program."

Mihajlov tackles a wide range of problems in these essays. Sometimes his thinking seems rather simplistic, sometimes he contradicts himself or appears to be bending his theories to fit reality, but most often he is original and provocative. He takes issue with his fellow dissidents as well as with the authorities. He is wary of organized religion, warning the Catholic Church that it must either make its peace with the Communists or join the religious renaissance at the risk of losing some of its worldly powers. He does not shrink from the simple truth that dissident nationalist movements are unnatural partners in the fight against totalitarianism, since democratic liberties are not national but international concerns. He believes that evil is also international and that "the increase of evil on one part of the planet can be felt everywhere."

The man who wrote these essays is himself a victim of evil. Confined at this moment in a Yugoslav prison, his fine mind and remarkable talents now cope with hunger strikes and solitary con-

finement. Fearing for his future, we nevertheless find some comfort in this book, which testifies to his faith, his courage, and his independence as well as to his extraordinary will to survive.

To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account by Saul Bellow

(Viking; 182 pp.; \$8.95)

Suhail Hanna

There must have been something frank and intimate about the relationship between Abba Eban and Lyndon Johnson. "I had heard," Saul Bellow reports in *To Jerusalem and Back*, "that Johnson once received Eban with the words, 'Mr. Ambassador. Ah'm sittin' here scratchin' my ass and thinkin' about Is-ra-el.'" In his latest book Bellow does more than just think about Israel. He meditates about her, rejoices in her triumphs, agonizes in her failures, cringes at her desires, marvels at her destiny, flaunts his rhetoric in the face of her sense of history. He is the Bellow of the brilliant novels, exhibiting a controlled yet energetic style, bursting with wit, delicate with cynicism.

Cast into a diary-travelogue format, the book roams over Jewish concerns emanating from the streets, offices, and homes in Israel to the intellectual circles of England, France, and America. While Bellow's wife, Alexandra, takes up residence at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she is to teach mathematics, Bellow matriculates in the fall of 1975 as an "interested inexperienced observer," an American refugee-in-residence in a baffling Israel. Instead of imprisoning himself in a library carrel to do some writing or in a café to do some reading, he navigates among the people—politicians, poets, barbers, professors, masseurs—freely and frequently, going from one place to another, interviewing, probing, prodding, assessing, observing, listening, resolving, and recording what he sees and hears and his reaction to it all.

To Bellow the modern age has produced an Israeli political state that seems to depend, even thrive, on tensions for its existence: a state that has reached the bitter crossroads of per-

petual war or precarious peace with its Arab neighbors. The articulation of the hazards of either road is what Bellow seems to be hearing. Many voices are hoarse. Most will probably never be otherwise. At least it is difficult to imagine them otherwise. In a conversation with the novelist David Shahar, Bellow's very American—one suspects it is purposely assumed—and evenhanded approach to the Arab-Israeli crisis evokes this outburst from Shahar: "They don't want our peace proposals. They don't want our concessions, they want us destroyed!" He slams the table. "You don't know them. The West doesn't know them. They will not let us live. We must fight for our lives. It costs the world nothing to discuss, discuss, discuss. And the French are whores and will sell them all the weapons they want, and the British too. And who knows about the Americans! And when the Arabs at last have their way, perhaps the French and the British will be nice and send ships to evacuate our women and children."

There is, it seems, some poignancy in all this rhetoric, particularly now that most Arabs, in the midst of a peace offensive nurtured after the 1973 war, no longer speak of Jewish annihilation. If they are to speak at all, they are likely to stutter through thoughts of reconciliation. Still, Shahar's view represents a definite, if not dominant, mood in Israel, a mood Bellow heard from different quarters expressed with varying measures of paranoia. The frequent bomb blasts in Israel, the gun battles at the borders, the attacks on Israeli interests outside the country, all fuel this mood.

The wars, especially the 1973 war with Egypt and Syria, left the Israelis in

a terrible condition. "In almost every apartment house," Bellow writes, "the neighbors tell you of a war widow who is trying to bring up her children. The treatment of young widows and parents who have lost their sons is, I am told, a new psychiatric specialty. Israel is pressed, it is a suffering country. People feel the pressures of enemies as perhaps the psalmist felt them, and sometimes seem ready to cry out, 'Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth.' Still, almost everyone is reasonable and tolerant, and rancor against the Arabs is rare." One wonders, Bellow hopes. Some Israelis share his hope.

Laced with fine vignettes and charac-

ter sketches, *To Jerusalem and Back* records the multiplicity of views among leading politicians in Israel and key Jewish intellectuals outside of it. From these views Bellow does not draw a clear, cogent solution to the Palestine problem. He fails to argue the merits of the varied positions; he merely asserts them as composing that mosaic of will that reflects the emblem of the Israeli state. Still, Bellow is compassionate and concerned. If his compassion, from a Palestinian point of view, is elusive, his fundamental concern is not. Simply stated, that concern is in minimizing, to use his words, "corpse-making" in the Middle East.

ing further fuel for atheism itself.

Of special interest too is the extent to which the search for atheists and the debates about God were related to politics and political theory. The atheist-hunters were especially fearful of any traces of influence by Hobbes and Machiavelli—according to Redwood, the two most feared and hated writers of the time. Above all, these well-established clerics feared revolution and thus feared every new idea and treatise they thought might upset their position of orthodoxy and power.

In this exhaustive and sometimes exhausting study there are entire chapters devoted to the Trinitarian controversy, the "causes" of atheism, the nature of reason and the reason of nature, the Encyclopaedists such as Cudworth and Berkeley, the impact of science, witches, and ridicule, but two of the chapters promise more than they give. There is really little new or interesting on the intriguing topic of witches and other supernatural phenomena. The disappointment is even greater with respect to the chapter on ridicule, since the book's title leads one to believe that ridicule is to be a major topic for discussion.

Readers will want to know whether the fears of the atheist-hunters were justified or whether the controversy was really little more than sound and fury, with no basis in reality. Was atheism as prevalent and dangerous as the tract writers and pamphleteers feared? These and other questions are raised but not clearly answered by Redwood. At points he suggests the need for further study, but more frequently he psychologizes the problem, referring to what he calls the "psychology of dispute," and thus reduces the combatants to petty clerics eager only for job security and promotion, squabbling among themselves for no good reason. Assuredly, there must have been some who entered the fray for the sake of nothing more than personal aggrandizement. Assuredly too, there were others who honestly feared the intellectual challenges that pressed upon them. In point of historical fact there was a revolution in progress, and while in retrospect we may see it as progress, there is little reason to suppose they could have seen it as anything less than the end of their reality and a threat to their very being. The winds of change blow icily on those who feel the blast

Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England, 1660-1750

by John Redwood

(Harvard University Press; 287 pp.; \$12.00)

J.T. Moore

England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a cauldron of controversy. New ideas in science, philosophy, and religion clashed with the old, and the repercussions are still felt today. It was a crucial turning point for England as vestiges of the medieval world painfully gave way to the modern world. An age of enlightenment for some, it was also an age of fear and sadness for the many who tried desperately to hold onto the past.

This dynamic period in the history of religious thought has been the subject of many excellent studies, but none with quite the perspective of this new work by John Redwood. It is Redwood's contention that most, if not all, of the controversy of the period centered around a single problem: the existence and nature of God and how people related to God in the truly Christian community. In particular, Redwood focuses on the fear of atheism and examines the ways in which each new idea was subjected to intense analysis to determine its theistic truth in conformity with established beliefs.

It is Redwood's emphasis upon the

lesser known and now virtually forgotten figures—the "minute philosophers," as he calls them—that gives much of the freshness and value to this book. Such major figures as Newton, Cudworth, Locke, and Berkeley are given due and generally adequate attention, but it is with the soldiers in the trenches that Redwood spends most of his time. These were the tract writers and pamphleteers who waged the campaign against atheism and who carried the controversies on and on for a hundred years.

Redwood demonstrates that these lesser academics and clerics saw the threat of atheism everywhere. No intellectual area or endeavor, not one word, was exempt from their scrutiny. A writer was held directly responsible if his work had even the slightest hint of atheism, or if it could give even indirect and unintended support to its cause. For example, Cudworth's masterpiece against atheism and materialism, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, was condemned by some because, in detailing so much of the atheistic view it sought to refute, it was felt to be provid-