Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's expulsion to the West in 1974 marks the beginning of the latter phase of Solzhenitsyn's life and career as a writer. The earlier phase of Solzhenitsyn, living and writing within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union, is a typical case of a genuine artist in confrontation with the prevailing oppressive official forces. It is inevitably hampered by arrests, periods of hiding from the authorities, problems of illegal, underground publishing ("Samizdat"), and of censorship, hostile reviews, exclusion from 'mainstream' literature represented by the Union of Soviet Writers. Finally, there are Solzhenitsyn's eight years of prison life and three years of exile, which take on the ominous shape of "perpetual exile," to use his own words in Cancer Ward. The twin factors of prison and exile are very crucial, bearing down on Solzhenitsyn's entire being, metamorphosed into his creative works.

Exile, if anything, only strengthened the popularity status of Solzhenitsyn at the international level. While residing in the Soviet Union, he had to face a lot of trouble. The local branch of the Writers' Union had expelled him from the Union on November 4th, 1969. On December 16th the same year he wrote a letter to "The Times" titled "The Silencing of
Russian Writers", which was an appeal to the concerned authorities to stop persecuting him. It is worthwhile to recall that the several writers and artists who signed the letter include A. Alvarez, W.H. Auden, Günter Grass, Graham Greene, Julian Huxley, Alfred Kazin, Arthur Miller, Mary McCarthy and Muriel Spark. A letter from Western intellectuals to Konstantin Fedin, secretary general of the Writers' Union, declaring solidarity with Solzhenitsyn was signed by Arthur Miller, Richard Wilbur, John Updike, John Cheever, Truman Capote, Carlos Fuentes, Günter Grass, Dürrenmatt, Heinrich Böll and Kurt Vonnegut. Inspite of such international support, Solzhenitsyn was facing a formidable situation.

In "Why the Kremlin Fears Solzhenitsyn" (1974), Harrison Salisbury comments that the great Russian writers "have assumed the role of critics of Russian society and have been automatically considered 'enemies of the state'" and that "nowhere has the writer acted more as the conscience of the people than he has in Russia" (44). Solzhenitsyn precisely attempted to take up this moral responsibility and had to face the crude consequences of his aspiration.

Patriotic fervour is the core of Solzhenitsyn's career, life, art and commitment, which pitted him against the dreaded Communist Regime, ending in his forceful expulsion. The semiotic image of Solzhenitsyn hounded out of Russia looms
large over the 'cold-war' Europe and underscores the inevitable threat that he posed to the Soviet Regime. From 1962 to 1974 he has been a direct participant, witness and victim of the historical changes in modern Russia. Ironically, his status as an 'insider' (within the Soviet Union) is subsumed by the fact that he was treated as an 'outsider' even within his own country. From 1974 Solzhenitsyn had to face a different reality.

Solzhenitsyn had subtly hinted at the process of Americanization of the globe that had been taking place for a very long time. It was on Western soil that Solzhenitsyn realized that he also had become a victim of this political manipulation of the United States. It would not be unfair to say that the Western reception of this Russian writer was conditioned by the political whims of the United States in the post-war period. If Solzhenitsyn had become another Nabokov America then would have been more supportive of Solzhenitsyn. As Jeri Laber in "The Selling of Solzhenitsyn" (1974) puts it, "As a media creature, Solzhenitsyn has been, at least until recently, an anomaly: he remained an enigma, surrounded by mystery and confusion . . ." (5). Solzhenitsyn's arrival in America removed this veil of mystery. The hard core realist observations on the USA by Solzhenitsyn then became anathema. The West which had earlier devoured his works deriding the Communist Regime with avidity, now found his criticism of its
own society and political set-up distasteful. From a seer, Solzhenitsyn was unceremoniously brought down to a level where he was faulted as 'orthodox', 'chauvinist', 'didactic', a 'moralist' and a 'pariah'. Cast off from favour, he came to be viewed as a kind of outcast. In "Solzhenitsyn: Prisoner of Chillon" (1981), Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova observe that "Solzhenitsyn is as solitary as a wolf who has left the pack and does not recognize its laws" (70). Is Solzhenitsyn a lone wolf who does not recognize the laws of the group or is he a lone fighter who has identified the wolf who makes all the laws?

This chapter focuses on selected major works of Solzhenitsyn which belong to the later phase of his life and career. They are From Under The Rubble (1975), The Gulag Archipelago III (1976), Lenin in Zurich (1976), the "Harvard Address" (1978), The Mortal Danger: How Misconceptions About Russia Imperil America (1980) and his recent Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals (1991).

Lenin's Failure as a Leader

Solzhenitsyn's thinking has been largely dominated by one single motif—Russia and its national consciousness which has been warped by the Communists. As long as he was in Russia, Solzhenitsyn's mind was drawn obsessively and almost exclusively towards Stalinism though this fixation was
eventually significantly altered. A common criticism against Solzhenitsyn is that his interest in Russia has been diluted after his physical estrangement from Russia. But the fact is that after his expulsion, Solzhenitsyn has become even more fiercely committed to his nation, always trying to create an awareness in his countrymen that it is high time that Russia got rid of aggressive Marxist ideologies, and set herself on the path of "repentance" and "self-limitation" (The Mortal Danger 67). In the "Foreword" to From Under the Rubble (1975) (a collection of essays by several dissidents, with three of his own contributions) Solzhenitsyn seems to resent that people from outside are making "arbitrary judgements" about "our recent history and the possibilities of our people" (ix). Defining the important role of dissidents in revealing the truth, he poignantly says that the voices destined to express what was known at the appropriate time fell prematurely silent, the documents perished and the gaze of the outside researchers cannot penetrate into those dark depths beneath the piles of unsorted rubbish. (ix)

He declares that it is from beneath these depths from "under the rubble" that these people are "putting forth their first feeble shoots" (ix). In the essay "As Breathing and Consciousness Return" included in the book, Solzhenitsyn stresses that "Only through repentance of a multitude of
people can the air and the soil of Russia be cleansed so that a new, healthy national life can grow up. We cannot raise a clean crop on a false, unsound, obdurate soil" (119).

Solzhenitsyn's scheme of a revival of Russia is fully delineated in his "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations" which is one of the three essays of Solzhenitsyn published in From Under The Rubble. For this writer, morality precedes everything and "repentance" is "the only starting point for spiritual growth" (107). He refers to the treacherous deed of the Americans and the British in the Second World War when "hundreds of thousands" of civilian refugees were handed back to the U.S.S.R., who were later exterminated in the labour camps. The British and Americans have not "raised a finger" against this. Solzhenitsyn's several examples reiterate the indifference towards "repentance". He reminds us of the rich tradition of penitential movements in the Russia of the past. Solzhenitsyn's programme of "repentance" is very strongly put forward because a country such as Russia badly needs a transformation. Solzhenitsyn laments that

No country in the twentieth century has suffered like ours, which within its own borders has destroyed as many as seventy million people over and above those lost in the world wars — no one in modern history has experienced such destruction. (118)
It reflects the degree to which the Russian nation is guilty and the imminent need for some kind of a salvation. Solzhenitsyn believes in "repentance" as a "clearing of the ground, the establishment of a clean basis in preparation for further moral actions . . ." (134). This desire in Solzhenitsyn to purge Russia of its sins has become an obsession with him. In dealing with Russia and its history he realizes that Soviet Russia's plight was predestined, (as sketched in *August 1914*), and doomed by fanatical leaders (as delineated in *Lenin in Zurich* and *The Gulag Archipelago*).

*Lenin in Zurich*, published in 1976, breaks fresh ground in historiography. This work forms the second part of the trilogy (*The Red Wheel*), *August 1914* being the starting point. It breaks down the monologic account especially the Communist history which has glorified Lenin as a founding force behind the Russian Revolution. Lenin in this work is a "typical armchair philosopher, a dreamer" (144) whose "energy for years and years had gone into quarrels and wrangles, and schisms and squabbles" (144). Solzhenitsyn's Lenin is indifferent to the Revolution, and hence is no true leader and politician. Solzhenitsyn is a direct descendant of the Revolution, having been born in 1918. In his third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* Solzhenitsyn recalls: "I had spent my childhood in queues . . . but I could not make out the connection between the lack of bread and the ruin of the countryside, or understand why it had happened" (21).
Solzhenitsyn blames his country's ruin on the policies of leaders like Lenin and Stalin. He is able to offer a critique of the debilitating effect of a bloody revolution although in hindsight. His abhorrence of revolutions has been reflected in early works like Letter to the Soviet Leaders and August 1914. He realizes now at the conceptual level the thrust that the Marxist ideology gave to the Revolution. He reveals how dictatorships become a natural offshoot of perverted revolutions.

In Lenin in Zurich Solzhenitsyn by way of definition says that a true politician "is not at the mercy of his years, his feelings, circumstances but brings to bear at all seasons and times of day an unvarying mechanical efficiency in his actions, his speeches, his battles" (95-96). But Lenin proved the contrary. In demystifying the myth of Lenin, Solzhenitsyn presents Lenin not as an adorable hero of the Russian Revolution of 1917, but as one who "lacked breadth" (133), and wasted his "strength in meaningless struggles, with nothing to show except mounds of scribbled paper" (133). A "schismatic narrowness doomed" Lenin to "sterility in Europe" leaving him "no further except in Russia" (134). Solzhenitsyn's portrait of Lenin subverts the unmerited eulogy and idealization of leaders that characterize traditional history. It goes well with Solzhenitsyn's contention in The Gulag Archipelago that it was not Stalin who betrayed the Revolution but Lenin, for
the latter was responsible for founding the very idea of Totalitarianism. Lenin is characterized as one who "was capable of taking the world apart, of blowing it up, and then rebuilding it" but who "had been born too soon, . . . merely to be a torment to himself" (101). In questioning Lenin Solzhenitsyn thus questions the Revolution, its ideology, the perverted Marxist ideals and the fate of Russia herself in the hands of leaders like Lenin and Stalin. Such a multiple perspective emerges more vividly in the later phase of Solzhenitsyn's career. In alleging that Lenin betrayed the Revolution, Solzhenitsyn forces history, especially the Russian history, to take a retrospective look at its past, and also relate it to the present in a mutually interactive way.

Solzhenitsyn's portrayal of Lenin is not a result of a blind aversion to Lenin. We should here recollect Solzhenitsyn's own comments in The Gulag Archipelago I. Solzhenitsyn's cell mate was one Anatoly Ilyich Fastenko, whom Solzhenitsyn saw as a "big asset" to their Lubyanka cell, and whom he revered "both as a keeper of the old Russian traditions and as a living history of Russian revolutions" (190). Fastenko had known Lenin in a personal way. When someone called Fastenko by his "patronymic and asked "Ilyich, is it your turn to take out the latrine bucket?" (193), Solzhenitsyn was enraged:

... I was utterly outraged and offended because it seemed sacrilege to me not only to use Lenin's
patronymic in the same sentence as 'latrine bucket',
but even to call anyone on earth 'Ilyich' except that
one man, Lenin. (193)

This adoration of Lenin undergoes a reversal in Lenin
in Zurich. Solzhenitsyn is not quite objective in his
portrayal of Lenin, though he has stated in a BBC interview
that he had "gathered every grain of information" and "every
detail" he could and that his "only aim was to re-create him
[Lenin] alive, as he was" (qtd. in Paul Siegel,
"Solzhenitsyn's Portrait of Lenin" 1). It is quite evident in
Lenin in Zurich that Solzhenitsyn's aim was not to recreate
the historical Lenin but bring down Lenin from the high
pedestal that history had set him upon. Paul Siegel concludes
that Solzhenitsyn's portrait of Lenin "bears little
resemblance to the historical Lenin" (10). Nevertheless the
overall perception of Solzhenitsyn was relevant. History whose
"irrational" ways created Marxism is seen by Solzhenitsyn as a
"heavy wheel", "gathering speed like the red wheel of the
eengine . . ." (Lenin in Zurich 28). Solzhenitsyn's insight
into the real nature of Marxism is sharpened when he remarks
that "you could know your Marxism inside out and still not
find an answer when a real crisis burst upon you: the man who
finds that makes an original discovery" (38).

This preoccupation with Marxism's negative influence
becomes more intense in the exiled phase of Solzhenitsyn's
life. After 1974, Solzhenitsyn's reappraisal of Russian history is not merely in the context of Stalinism but is extended to Leninism as well as to the entire Western civilization. In *Lenin in Zurich* the focus on the patriarch among the Russian leaders must be understood in the light of Solzhenitsyn's vehement denunciation of totalitarianism for neutralising a whole nation. His exiled status compels Solzhenitsyn to direct his attention towards Russia where the demonic forces of perverted Marxism rule the roost. Solzhenitsyn's memories of the Gulag prison system have not waned even after 1974. The first two volumes of *Archipelago* deal with the creation and establishment of the camps. In the third volume published in 1976, Solzhenitsyn devotes more attention to the changing aspects of these camps and of the prisoners' attempts to overcome their abject state. Even in the second volume we noted how prison life is seen as a "blessing" by Solzhenitsyn. In the final volume he confesses that he "was groping for some new way to make sense of prison life" (37). Here he interprets the whole of Russian history as a succession of tyrannies and says with bitterness that

Whether it is Ivan the Terrible, Alexis the Gentle, heavy-handed Peter, or velvety Catherine, all the Tsars right up to the Crimean War knew one thing only — how to crush. To crush their subjects like beatles or caterpillars. *(The Gulag III: 79)*
Even so Solzhenitsyn cannot help concluding that Czarism as compared with the later reign of terror, is the lesser evil. He finds that the terrorism which characterized the post-revolutionary period did not exist in the Czarist times. He cites the example of seven attempts on Alexander II's life. He asks whether Alexander ever applied "the methods of prophylactic mass terror . . . Total terror as in 1918?" [emphasis added] and replies that the "concept didn't exist" (80-81). Solzhenitsyn as the chronicler of contemporary Russian history looks upon the Revolution of 1917 as the reflection of a single phenomenon — totalitarianism. Public opinion to which the Czarist period gave credence is unheard of in the post-revolutionary times. Even the scales of punishment vary in the two periods. In Solzhenitsyn's view Czardom has been "always weak and irresolute in pursuit of its enemies" (84).

In contrast to the Communist conception of society as materialistic and to the State determined notion of progress, Solzhenitsyn proposes the creation of a Russian society on moral grounds and on individual freedom. He qualifies it by saying that the "goal of human evolution is not freedom for the sake of freedom. Nor is it the building of an ideal polity. What matter, of course, are the moral foundations of society" (The Gulag III: 89). For Solzhenitsyn the Revolution was an instrument of oppression, which established its
atrocious rule from which Russia has not yet freed herself. What he proposes as a means to overcome such a state of affairs amounts to a rejection of Marxism, a collective sense of repentance by the Soviet Union, a return to the healthy aspects of the past to strengthen the present through self-repentance and self-limitation, the creation of a society based on morals and ethics. These guidelines lie scattered throughout his works.

Solzhenitsyn was able to conceive a morally directed history after he had touched the very depth of the labour camps in the sixth year of his imprisonment at Ekibastuz:

... the day when I deliberately let myself sink to the bottom and felt it firm under my feet — the hard, rocky bottom which is the same for all — was the beginning of the most important years in my life, the years which put the finishing touches to my character. From then onward there seems to be have been no upheavals in my life, and I have been faithful to the views and habits acquired at that time. (The Gulag III: 98)

Solzhenitsyn thus comes to see exile and his labour camp experiences as a blessing. Comparing himself with his predecessors who wrote but never finished what they began, he thanks his stars that he "had the good fortune: to thrust the first handful of truth through the open jaws of the iron gates before they slammed shut again" (The Gulag III: 471).
Solzhenitsyn's Critique of Contemporary West

Solzhenitsyn's deportation from the former Soviet Union and subsequent entry into the United States and settling at Vermont, sparked off a phenomenal controversy. The inherent complexity in Solzhenitsyn gains density with his response to this 'reception'. At the outset it should be mentioned that Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from Russia is expulsion only in a geo-political sense. That is, although he was away from Russia, Solzhenitsyn's unwavering attention had been towards his homeland. Unlike several other émigrés, he did not become Westernized. On the contrary he remained doggedly a patriotic Russian. A political label like "dissident" cannot justify Solzhenitsyn's treatment nor help one to argue that his affiliations are with the West and against the Soviet Union. James Clive in Bitter Seeds (1980) rightly praises Solzhenitsyn as a "creative artist of the first order" because "he has been trying to remember what a whole country has been conspiring for various reasons, to forget" (210).

In the act of remembering and representing, Solzhenitsyn, of course, has been unsparing. In the first phase itself he began with Stalinism and retraced his steps to Lenin and Marx and to the crucial debilitating war of 1914. Solzhenitsyn's focus was certainly more at a microcosmic level. Even at this juncture, the role played by the West did not escape Solzhenitsyn's attention, and was reviewed in One
Word of Truth (1970) and his Letter to the Soviet Leaders (1974). After 1974 Solzhenitsyn's vision has turned more critical. His banishment has served as a catalytic agent in his reevaluation of Russian history as well as that of the West. Earlier, Solzhenitsyn's observations from the Soviet Union were largely speculations about contemporary West, especially the United States. With his exiled and emigré status, Solzhenitsyn could become a direct participant in the Western politics of emigré reception. The drastic switch-over from an observer to a participant has given a distinct shape and thrust to Solzhenitsyn's views. The tension that ensues from an interaction between his earlier impression and the actual experience in the West heightens the complexity that constitutes the intellectual make-up of this artist. We become aware of the several latent dimensions of his thinking.

Earlier he could see the forces of the totalitarian regime operating mostly in relation to Stalin. Now, he is able to view the entire gamut of events not as a separate feature peculiar only to the former Soviet Union but as part of a larger context — namely world history. Even by the time of his Nobel Prize Speech (1970) and Letter to the Soviet Leaders (1974), there was this movement towards a broader international level.
Solzhenitsyn's exit from his motherland gave him the much needed breakthrough. In the very first article published during his exiled period — "As Breathing and Consciousness Return" included in From Under The Rubble, — he depicts the West as "crawling on hands and knees", "paralyzed, uneasy about the future, spiritually racked and dejected" (16), inspite of the fact that it has "supped more than its fill of every kind of freedom" (16). From this example Solzhenitsyn deduces that "unlimited external freedom in itself" is not enough to save Russia (16). Western decadence thus occupies Solzhenitsyn's mind even while his concentration is on Russia.

Solzhenitsyn's consciousness about the world historical scene was sharpened the keener for 1974. Living within Russia, his notions about the West were speculations. Now the reality, in interaction with Solzhenitsyn in the West, reveals facets of his mental acumen which were not very discernible earlier. The concern for mankind as a whole becomes more pronounced. Solzhenitsyn, a victim of the Soviet totalitarian regime, senses the danger of such a threat to other countries. He also sees the salvation when he opines in his "Repentance and Self-Limitation" that "The turn toward inner development, the triumph of inwardness over outwardness, if it ever happens, will be a great turning point in the history of mankind . . ." (From Under the Rubble 136). The "Harvard Address" (1978) provided Solzhenitsyn the right platform to express his views
about the Western world. It was followed by his subsequent analysis of the West, especially the United States, in *The Mortal Danger: How Misconceptions About Russia Imperil America* (1980).

Speaking about the Western world, it would be logical to begin with the subject of emigre' reception in regard to Solzhenitsyn. Jeri Laber aptly notes that "as long as Solzhenitsyn was in Russia" he was a "perfect symbol" for the West (7). Solzhenitsyn, "protected from over exposure by distance and by his own eccentric reticence, . . . revealed no flaws" (7). Once Solzhenitsyn crossed the Iron Curtain, this respectable anonymity was stripped bare. As Jeri Laber puts it, "in the West" Solzhenitsyn was "no longer a symbol but a reality" (7). Settling down in the West, he found that he had to play a new role — that of an emigre' and exile, which was not going to endear him to the occident.

The West's attitude towards Solzhenitsyn and in turn his approach towards the West form a reciprocal relationship. At the centre of this reciprocity, there lies an ambivalence that characterizes both Solzhenitsyn and his host. The West while giving political asylum to this emigre' writer, had not bargained for the vehement criticism of its culture that was articulated publicly in Solzhenitsyn's "Harvard Address" (also sometimes referred to as *A World Split Apart*) and *The Mortal*
DANGER. Before 1974 the West looked upon Solzhenitsyn as a writer whose works satiated their anti-Soviet hunger that gnawed them. People expected Solzhenitsyn to continue his anti-Communist tirade even after his arrival in the democratic America, but Solzhenitsyn toppled this Western applecart with his stringent and scathing analysis of the Western world. It was carried to such a point that the West was portrayed as the more menacing of the two devils. The Western reverence for Solzhenitsyn had once reached such heights that several critics hailed him as a "prophet". But this prophet dwindled into a "pariah" once his criticism was directed against the very same West. Solzhenitsyn's precarious position proved no happier in the West than in Russia. Both sides had come to view him as a kind of malcontent.

Despite such a predicament, a major advantage of his emigré status was his absolute freedom to write. No Writers' Union could put a stop to his pen. From this position of a malcontent Solzhenitsyn has courted the wrath of the United States and the Soviet Union as well.

In his "Harvard Address" Solzhenitsyn attempts to analyse the root cause of the Western malaise, trying to account for it in terms of the implied ideologies of Humanism and Enlightenment. He traces it to the post-Renaissance worldview which formed the base for "political and social
doctrines". This Solzhenitsyn calls as "rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and practised autonomy of man from any higher force above him" (18). This "anthropocentricity" denies the presence of any "intrinsic evil" in man (18). The modern Western civilization took a turn for materialism when the heritage of "religious responsibility" of the West existing from "early democracies" diminished, ending in a "spiritual crisis" and "political impasse" (17). As an example he cites the ethos of contemporary West.

He blames secular Enlightenment for fostering Communism and Democracy. Ruining the impossibility of a convergence of worlds, he identifies the "split in today's world" (3) as more than a political issue, seeing it as "more profound and more alienating" (3). Solzhenitsyn views Humanism as a failure in the annals of history. Humanism has been invidiously used by Socialism and Communism in the later ages. Enlightenment and Marxism have been marked by "boundless materialism", and "freedom from religion and religious responsibility" (18). Communists in the Eastern Europe thrived on the support of Western intellectuals who "refused to see Communism's crimes, and when they no longer could do so, they tried to justify these crimes" (18). Humanism had led the West to privilege Man and his material needs, resulting in a spiritual decline. Regeneration of spirituality is the only solution to all
evils, Solzhenitsyn holds. He warns the West that it is on the path of destruction with its "welfare state", "legalism", "misuse of freedom", the unrestrained freedom of the Press, and an excessive indulgence in politics and social reforms. He stresses that

The humanistic way of thinking, which proclaimed itself our guide, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man, nor did it see any task higher than the attainment of happiness on earth. It started modern Western civilization on the dangerous trend of worshipping man and his material needs. (16-17)

Rationalizing the Western degeneration on historical grounds, Solzhenitsyn highlights the "harsh spiritual crisis" and "political impasse" in which the West finds itself.

How just is Solzhenitsyn's diatribe against the West? The Western way of life is no doubt materialistic but that does not presuppose the absence of anything benevolent to the spirit in the Western culture. It is the freedom of the Press (which Solzhenitsyn attacked) that brought Solzhenitsyn to limelight at the international level when expelled from the Soviet Union. Secondly, though Humanism and Enlightenment have been partly responsible for the gradual enfeebling of the force of morality and spirituality in society, the movements by themselves have played significant roles in the flow of world history in advancing human relationships. Enlightenment
has given a new dimension to the faculty reason as being a final authority. The primacy given to reason has helped the Western civilization to formulate several ideas on secularization, empirical methods, and protest against moribund traditions by promoting political and social democracy. Reason has also helped to promulgate the idea of progress. Solzhenitsyn seems to have ignored the positive aspects of the twin Western movements. Of course, the West unabashedly exploited these new-found ideas to create a craving for an immoderate materialistic well-being amongst its people, and Solzhenitsyn is surely justified in censuring it.

Solzhenitsyn bemoans the spiritual poverty inherent in the West in the twentieth century. In his introduction to From Under the Rubble Max Hayward says, "the problems of the modern world, Soviet as well as Western can no longer be solved on the political plane . . . but on the ethical level" (8). This almost summarizes Solzhenitsyn's proposition for a spiritual revival. Solzhenitsyn expresses the hope for a salvation while regretting that "we have lost the concept of a Supreme Complete Entity" ("Harvard Address" 19).

Solzhenitsyn's "Harvard Address" towards its conclusion reaches a highly philosophical pitch. The core of the whole speech hangs on Solzhenitsyn's notion of spirituality which alone can save mankind. Politics and social reforms have
blighted one's vision of spirituality. Solzhenitsyn concretizes this by sketching the trampling of spirituality by "the party mob in the East", and "by the commercial one in the West" (19). He refers to this as the central crisis. Making his case against Humanism, he emphasizes that man's journey should be "an experience of moral growth" (19). He advocates a "reappraisal" of human values, for "Only by the voluntary nurturing in ourselves of freely accepted and serene self-restraint can mankind rise above the world stream of materialism" (19). He raises a clarion call to let go the hold of the "ossified formulas of the Enlightenment" 19).

Solzhenitsyn's conclusion, though hazy and rhetorical, does render some meaning. He talks about the world having reached a "major watershed in history" which will demand from people "a spiritual blaze", and one has to "rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life" where one's "spiritual being will not be trampled upon . . ." (20). He adds: "This is ascension similar to climbing on to the next anthropological stage. No one on earth has any other way left but — upward" (20). Solzhenitsyn at this juncture is at an advantageous position to view both the Russian decadence as well as the Western one. In both cases he recognizes the necessity for regeneration through spirituality. He holds that after the Renaissance, Western man has become more self-centred than ever, beginning to believe strongly in his own
essential goodness and right to gratification. Solzhenitsyn cannot be branded as "anti-Western" for holding such a view.

The West has set a rather bad example for the rest of the world, so much so that a country is often judged on the way it follows in the "direction of the West." Solzhenitsyn is positive that such a "conception is a fruit of Western incomprehension of the essence of other worlds, a result of mistakenly measuring them all with a Western yardstick" (5). Solzhenitsyn condemns this deplorable situation as opposed to the "real picture of our planet's development" (5).

With his penchant for things "ancient" he quotes "an ancient truth" that "Our Earth — divided against itself cannot hold" (3). The split in the world that Solzhenitsyn talks about is presented as a grave danger. His jibes at the West have provoked several Western critics to take up cudgels against him. The defects of the West which he presents are very much an existing reality but one cannot make a totally sweeping judgement based on Solzhenitsyn's criticism. Yet Solzhenitsyn's censure of "Law" as the ultimate decision maker and his denunciation of the misuse of freedom, and the highly materialistic bent of the Western mind, and the lack of censorship are well founded.
It is in such a situation that the stress he places on "spirituality" becomes his major contribution to modern civilization. Solzhenitsyn's spiritual notions seem highly idealistic in today's context as they were when he delivered the "Harvard Address" seventeen years ago. The Western world was not very receptive to Solzhenitsyn's panacea for its maladies. Michael Novak in "On God and Man" charges Solzhenitsyn with practising a kind of "spiritual imperialism" (133), though he says he has "esteem for the secular saint" (134). Harold Berman strikes a balance when he comments in "The Weightier Matters of the Law" that "What is required is not a rejection of the positive values either of the East or of the West but rather a new integration of them" (113). Berman also ascends to the universal level of Solzhenitsyn when he ends his article with the call: "all the cultures of the world must draw on one another's resources if mankind is to enter the new stage to which Solzhenitsyn calls us" (113).

The Solzhenitsyn scheme of values surely must meet with a negative reaction in the Western world. Richard Pipes criticises him saying that "like many conservatives, Solzhenitsyn is far better at diagnosing ills than at providing remedies" (119). Of course, Solzhenitsyn provides "remedies" but how far is the West ready to yield itself without any prejudice, and make an attempt at a transformation? In the first place, the West rarely shows an inclination for introspection, especially in relation to its
present discontent. Of course we recall that there was a long and rich tradition of liberal thinkers, particularly in the early part of this century, who tirelessly exhorted their society to think, turn inward before acting. It is equally a fact that this urbane, humane liberal spirit has been superseded by a violent political culture in the post-modern times. The sharp reaction to Solzhenitsyn's vehement criticism is understandable because after all it was the West which sheltered him for twenty years. From an absolute point of view the reactions of both are far from perfect. Even so the West would do well to make a more balanced appraisal of Solzhenitsyn.

Solzhenitsyn, harping on his notion of "self-restraint", and "sacrifice" and the like, finds the legalistic base of Western society bereft of any morals. He perceives that the "letter of the law" has a negative influence leading to a "spiritual mediocrity" that "paralyzes man's noblest impulses" (8). The abuse of freedom has sunk to such a low level where no distinction is made between "freedom for good deeds and the freedom for evil deeds" (8). A statesman who wishes to do something constructive has to be on his guard, prove himself in the eyes of the press and gain Parliamentary support. In such a situation, a truly great person finds it difficult to "assert himself" (8) because he has to overcome these traps set by socio-political forces. Solzhenitsyn thus convincingly argues that "mediocrity" triumphs under the guise
of "democratic restraints" (8). The misuse of liberty and the lack of any scale of judgement in the pursuit of freedom are also a target of attack. Solzhenitsyn gives the example of the Western youth's exposure to crime, pornography and similar social evils (9). It is ironic that contemporary Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union is caught in the same frenzy that Solzhenitsyn assailed in the West. Exposing the powerful nature of Western legality Solzhenitsyn gives the example of "terrorism". When a government takes steps to curb terrorism, public opinion intervenes to condemn it as violation of civil rights (9). Solzhenitsyn is able to locate this "tilt of freedom toward evil" as stemming from a "humanistic and benevolent concept" which sees man as the "master of this world" who "does not bear any evil within himself" (9). He avers that the "defects of life are caused by misguided social systems" (9) which require to be rectified.

Solzhenitsyn's criticism of the role of the Western Press, though based on solid grounds, oversteps limits. He holds that the "press can act the role of public opinion or miseducate it" (10). The power of the press supersedes the "legislature, the executive and the judiciary" (10), reflecting "generally accepted patterns of judgements", the "sum effect being not competition but unification" (11). In his opinion an individual leading a meaningful life has no need for information. The cloistered life of Solzhenitsyn at Vermont warrants for such a view, enhanced by the fact that he
was more bothered about his own country than the West. But in the West, the Press does play a vital role, though not always an objective role. Solzhenitsyn mercilessly jibes at the power of the Press, diagnosing "hastiness" and "superficiating" as the "psychic diseases of the twentieth century" manifested in the Press. We should not forget that at a very crucial moment in his life (his entry into the West) Solzhenitsyn was aided most generously by the Press. Jeri Laber quotes Howard Smith of ABC News who announced that "it is a privilege to live at the same time as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. We must not let him down" (16). It should also be remembered that once censorship was clamped down on Solzhenitsyn's works after his One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, most of his works were published only in the West. The very variety of opinions expressed about Solzhenitsyn's Harvard speech rules out his allegations about the Western press. Solzhenitsyn poses a basic question, under "what law" had the press been elected and to "whom is it responsible?" (10). He compares the Communist East where a journalist is "appointed as a state official" (10), with the way Western journalists are "voted" to "their positions of power. But he forgets to remember the difference in the set up of the Press. In the Communist East the press is not a free organisation as it is in the West. Solzhenitsyn also accuses the Western press of having a vested interest in the "trend of preferences" (10) which are mostly influenced by the spirit of the time. From this Solzhenitsyn concludes that "Unrestrained freedom exists for the press, but not for the readership,
because newspapers mostly transmit in a forceful and emphatic way those opinions which do not too openly contradict their own and that general trend" (11). On this point Solzhenitsyn could not be closer to the truth. This "general trend" and unified attitude on the part of journalists that Solzhenitsyn speaks of, does in no way justify either the freedom or the workings of the Western press.

Solzhenitsyn elsewhere satirizes the vested interests of the Western media calling its scheme as "political kowtowing to CPSU" (The Mortal Danger 51). He quotes both the "Voice of America" and "BBC" as solid examples. The "Voice of America" distorts the Russian language, ignores religious programmes on Orthodox services and censors certain news. Solzhenitsyn cites the censorship of his speech on the dissident Alexander Ginzburg who was arrested on February 4th, 1977. Solzhenitsyn recalls that his speech comprised of only three sentences, of which the VOA censored the following two:

This reprisal affects people in the West far more than it might seem at first sight. It is a significant step in the unremitting and all-inclusive policy of securing the Soviet rear in order to facilitate the offensive operation which it has been conducting so successfully over the last few years and which can only be intensified in the future: an assault on the strength, spirit, and the very existence of the West. (The Mortal Danger 52)
His statement to the 1977 Sakharov Hearings in Rome was also obliterated by the VOA on account of the following passage:

. . . [I would like] to hope that the spine-chilling accounts heard from your rostrum might pierce the deafness of material well-being which will respond only to the trumpet of doom but heeds no lesser sound. May they penetrate the awareness of those short-sighted individuals who are content to relax and to bask in the venomous melodies of Eurocommunism. (The Mortal Danger 52)

Solzhenitsyn's criticism of the "inept utilization of the mightiest weapon" (53) is well founded. Solzhenitsyn demythicizes the Western press's claim to Truth, accuracy and fairness.

Solzhenitsyn also draws attention to the fact that although the West is usually seen as the one which "shows the world the way to successful economic development" ("Harvard Address" 12), there is a deep dissatisfaction with their society in the minds of many. It has made them lean toward socialism and he identifies this as a "dangerous current" (12). He confesses that "With the experience of a country where socialism has been realized, I shall certainly not speak for such an alternative" ("Harvard Address" 12).
Solzhenitsyn thus demonstrates that the East as well as the West cannot be a model for each other. He firmly states, "I could not recommend your society as an ideal for the transformation of ours" ("Harvard Address" 12). Placing both blocs on par with each other he remarks: "... a society cannot remain in an abyss of lawlessness, as is the case in our country. But it is also demeaning for it to stay on a soulless and smooth plane of legalism, as is the case in yours" (13).

In the same "Harvard Address" he contrasts the Western and the Soviet worlds. He asserts that there is much crime in the West rather than in "the lawless Soviet society" inspite of the former having achieved the "best social conditions" (9). In order to substantiate his contention he presents the example of the Soviet camp prisoners who are labelled as prisoners but are innocent. We have to remind ourselves that "legality" in the United States is totally different from law in the U.S.S.R. "Legality" exists even in the U.S.S.R. but under a different guise. It is the law of the Soviet power structures of totalitarianism. The Gulag volumes explain in detail the laws that operate in the camps. Even in the Czarist times the law operated as "Katorga" (hard labour), later reinstated by Stalin in 1943. Several laws operated in the Gulag prisons. In the wake of the Revolution of 1917 Lenin as the leader framed laws of every kind, whereby the Regime could
establish itself firmly. Ironically enough the Soviet Union after its break up, now reflects a high crime rate which the mass media repeatedly report, and it it hardly edifying.

In spite of flaws arising sometimes out of shortsightedness, sometimes prejudice, Solzhenitsyn's address at Harvard reveals to the world the wrong direction humanity is heading for. It reiterates that the only way for everyone is but "upward". Sidney Hook in his "Solzhenitsyn and Western Freedom" (1979), draws attention to the indisputable fact that "rarely in modern times — especially in times of relative peace — have one man's voice and words provoked the Western world to an experience of profound soul-searching" (573).

This indomitable power of Solzhenitsyn is part of his intellectual force that slowly acquired the ability to comprehend the various realities at a deeper level with all their implications. Solzhenitsyn's emigre and exiled status enabled him to perceive these larger implications and the historical contradictions.

Solzhenitsyn was able to apprehend the creation and establishment of power structure by the totalitarian regimes as also its role in the international scene. Traditional Soviet history has been made insensitive to its own insulated course. No external force could cross the Iron Curtain to comprehend this course. In his "Truth and Power" Michel
Poucault refers to a "new politics of truth" (Power/Knowledge 138). Solzhenitsyn in his works, especially in the Gulag volumes, describes the means of production of this 'regime' of truth. 'Truth' is substituted by 'Official Truth' in every consequent government that takes over in the Soviet Union. Solzhenitsyn also clarifies how even in such a set up fanatic individuals could mould history in the Soviet Union by citing the example of Joseph Stalin:

We are forever being told that individuals do not mold history, especially when they resist the course of progress, but for a quarter of a century one such individual twisted our tails as if we were sheep and we did not even dare to squeal. (The Gulag III: 279)

Solzhenitsyn comments sardonically that "We honor Great Evildoers, we venerate Great Murderers" (368). In a highly rhetorical vein Solzhenitsyn remarks, "Shall we sum up the whole history of Russia in a single phrase? It is the land of smothered opportunities" (413). Solzhenitsyn establishes "terrorism" as essential for the functioning of power structures. Within Russia, he was able to analyse this aspect of totalitarianism from a Russian point of view. As a political exile he is able to view it in the global context.

**Misinformation, Totalitarianism and the USA**

Solzhenitsyn has been projected from different perspectives during his life within Russia and outside — as
narrator, survivor, protester, dissident, thinker, philosopher, Marxist, Leninist, anti-Marxist, anti-Stalinist, dialectician, martyr, seer, sage, prophet, moralist, humanist, orthodox, liberal, Christian etc. But this is how Solzhenitsyn saw himself in 1976:

I am proud to belong to this mighty race! we were not a race, but they made us one! . . . we meet, look into each other's eyes, exchange a couple of words — and what need for further explanation? We are ready to help each other out. Our kind has friends everywhere. (The Gulag III: 462)

Deeming himself as a chronicler of Russian history, he plunges into its depth and arises with a new vision. The Soviet/German contribution to world history is the creation of a new race — of zeks, camp labourers, exiles and survivors. This was the result of a Stalinist experiment (imprisoning people on the basis of their nationalities, social origin and even profession). Solzhenitsyn's affirmation of life in such circumstances is best expressed in his own words: "life behind bars has given us a new measure for men and things" (The Gulag III: 462). After 1974, in the process of revising Russian history, he becomes a critic of history, himself and his Western environment. In the third volume of The Gulag Archipelago he mentions receiving letters from today's zeks (during Khrushchev's period) who raise a single cry: "What
about us? Nothing has changed from Ivan Denisovich's time' (477). Solzhenitsyn wryly remarks in response: "... for today's zeks my book is no book, my truth is no truth unless there is a continuation, unless I go to speak to them, too" (478).

Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* is a solid reminder of the Totalitarian myth. After moving to the West, he became more conscious of the demonic potent of this myth. Yet another of his valuable documents, *The Mortal Danger: How Misconceptions About Russia Imperil America* (1980) sheds much light on the danger of Communism and as much on its misrepresentation by the West and the possible means of changing this scene for the better. It is addressed to those who are aware of Communism as an "evil" but have failed to comprehend its true import. Sadly enough such people function as "policy advisers" and "political leaders" who go about committing "fresh blunders" of misrepresentation (1).

Solzhenitsyn's *The Mortal Danger* reflects his position as an artist who prises out the "truth" about Russia irrespective of his pride of being a Russian.

*The Mortal Danger* is also a work where Solzhenitsyn finds the central aporia of the Western, rather American politics — its ambition to impinge or superimpose itself on the former Soviet Union. This work talks of two fatal errors
— the indifference in realizing the hostility of Communism to mankind, its existence based on the use of terror, and the impossibility of a synchronous existence with "communism on the same planet" (2). Solzhenitsyn uses a vivid and ominous image in commenting that "either it will spread, cancer-like, to destroy mankind, or else mankind will have to rid itself of communism" (2).

Solzhenitsyn's *The Mortal Danger* chiefly deals with the second error of assuming "an indissoluble link between the universal disease of communism and the country where it first seized control — Russia" (2). Here Solzhenitsyn shows up the ignorance of the United States in not recognizing the fact that whatever conceptions it had about Communism earlier had been academic. Misjudgement ought to be corrected if the United States wishes to save itself from danger. America does not realize the imminent danger it faces — a Communist take over.

Solzhenitsyn is severely critical about the misrepresentation of information carried out through American diplomats, American scholars, American correspondents in Moscow, and not the least, the emigres from U.S.S.R. But his remarks should not be mistaken for anti-American views. Stationed in the West, he becomes more sensitive to this deplorable situation because he realizes the value of vital
information, having witnessed the diabolical operation of censorship and distortion of truth behind the Iron Curtain. (As an example of the distortion we may cite here how the Soviet authorities were so dogmatic that once they knew of Solzhenitsyn's The First Circle, they published a counter called The Last Circle).

The very question of genuine historiography is brought in for a discussion when one sees the way the Americans have formed and assiduously circulated opinions through the mass media about U.S.S.R. Solzhenitsyn has faced a similar situation in the Soviet Union while protesting against censorship and the Union of Soviet Writers. When Solzhenitsyn confronts the same phenomenon in a different garb in the West, he is enraged. He openly accuses "American historical scholarship" of following Soviet historiography, which in the name of independent research "duplicates the approach" and even the methodology (The Mortal Danger 7). Western scholarship has not even until recently acknowledged the existence of the gulag islands as portrayed in The Gulag Archipelago. Certain topics that would hurt the Communist sentiments have been "hushed" up. Satirizing the vested interests of the West during the Second World War, Solzhenitsyn gives the example of the resistance to Communism in Russia between 1918 and 1922, which Western scholars in a derogatory manner labelled as "banditry" (The Mortal
Danaer 8). Solzhenitsyn condemns this one dimensional approach of American historiography as a "racist view" (9). This is extended to another tendency to treat the events of the twentieth century in Russia as well as other places, not as "peculiar to Communism" but as derived from "primordial Russian national characteristics established in some distant past" (8).

Solzhenitsyn castigates the politics of the West in dealing with Communism. The West had a dubious method, which changed according to the foreign policy needs. Communism was welcomed by the West when the latter was "infatuated" by it, but when Communism had to be derided, the West conveniently ascribed it to the Russian past. As a result the West feels secure and détente is assured. Besides, Western Communists are freed from blame. This double game is a diplomatic necessity. When Solzhenitsyn exposes this Western diplomatic game, speaking up for the sake of old Russia, he is dubbed as a Russian chauvinist.

The American scholars' unscrupulous distortion of the old Russian history is thus governed by their political compulsions. They betray their disregard for the spiritual history of Russia. Solzhenitsyn cites Richard Pipes's Russia Under the Old Regime as an example of such a distortion. Pipes ignores various sensitive issues such as the spiritual
life of Russia, its view of the world, its Orthodoxy. Solzhenitsyn describes the thrust of Pipes's book as reductive for its only objective is to show that the Russian nation is anti-human. The book concentrates mostly on Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great and Solzhenitsyn sarcastically remarks that "in any case, no two monarchs can determine the history of a thousand year old nation" (The Mortal Danger 12).

Another example is Robert Tucker's article published in "The New York Times" on December 21st in the year 1979. Tucker's article accuses Stalin of not being a "genuine socialist" (13) but of having followed Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. Although Tucker's allegation has a core of truth, we have to stop short of his presupposition of equating Czarism with just two monarchs - Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. Solzhenitsyn questions the very claim that Stalin found a model in the Czarist Russia of the above two. To prove his point he sketches a picture of the positive qualities of the Czarist Russia as opposed to the latter-day Russia. The Czarist Russia as portrayed by Solzhenitsyn redeems itself by the absence of camps, lesser number of political prisoners, absence of secret intelligence in the army, and special border troops, and the presence of legality of criminal investigations. Solzhenitsyn attributes the misrepresentations of the pre-revolutionary Russia to Soviet propaganda. He shows that before the 1914 war, Russia could boast of a flourishing
manufacturing industry, a rapid growth, a decentralized and flexible economy, a free press, cultural freedom, freedom of intelligentsia and higher education, and absence of deportations and "armed separatist movements" (The Mortal Danger 16). According to Solzhenitsyn, "this is not merely dissimilar to that of the Communist era, but is in every respect its direct antithesis" (16). Because of his positive view of the Czarist Russia critics have cast Solzhenitsyn as an orthodox Russian who is blindly in favour of the past.

The typical American habit — the misuse of the words "Russia" and "Russian" in place of "U.S.S.R." and "Soviet" — is an instance of a wilful ploy by the West. Solzhenitsyn views the sets of terms as "opposites" and "inimical" to each other (The Mortal Danger 3). He retorts that "'Russia' is to the Soviet Union as a man is to the disease afflicting him" (3)

When Solzhenitsyn refers to the Communist regime he uses the term "Soviet" but uses "Russia" to refer to the country. He holds that after the Revolution of 1917, the Russian state as a "functioning whole" cannot be called as "Russia". He quotes an incident of an American diplomat quibbling, "Let Brezhnev's Russian heart be run over by an American peacemaker!" (The Mortal Danger 4). Solzhenitsyn wishes "Russian" to be replaced with "Soviet" and therefore he retaliates: "a Brezhnev who has connived at the ruin of his
own people in the interests of foreign adventures has no Russian heart" (4). Solzhenitsyn stresses the fact that for today's purpose "Russia" refers only to the oppressed people or "suppressed national consciousness, religion and culture" (4); or else it could only designate "a future nation liberated from Communism" (4). [How true his words have come after the collapse of the Soviet Union!]. Another problem existing within Russia but with an international relevance is the equating of Moscow with "Soviet". By no stretch of the imagination could the world of Moscow steeped in comfort stand for the other parts of Russia.

The West believes that the Russians are the "ruling majority" in the U.S.S.R. which assumption Solzhenitsyn disclaims as false. He refers to the extermination of nationalities by the Communist authorities. The Gulag Archipelago explicates several cases of "exile based on nationality". In the third volume he declares that "for every nation exiled, an epic will some day be written — on its separation from its native and, and its destruction in Siberia" (392). From his The Mortal Danger we learn that the Russian villages have suffered most. The suppression of the Russian national consciousness is a major aim of the post-revolutionary leaders. The West too has been making attempts to put down this kind of consciousness and this is the consciousness that so dominates Solzhenitsyn and that
which he tries to revive in his country. The "Russian national consciousness" is aware of its rich tradition and repels Westernization. Solzhenitsyn, exiled in the West, surrounded by a liberal atmosphere, takes refuge in his strongly rooted national consciousness to counter the thrust of an alien ethos. And this also explains why his Vermont years constitute the life of a recluse. In his essay "In Pursuit of Solzhenitsyn", Michael Scammell, Solzhenitsyn's best biographer to date, recounts his meeting the subject of his book on June 12th of 1977. He describes his "four mile drive from town up to a narrow, winding road that runs beside a swiftly flowing mountain stream" to Solzhenitsyn's "fifty-acre estate" (154). He notices that

One aspect of the popular myth was accurate . . . The picture of the former Gulag prisoner surrounding himself with a fence of his own making and shutting himself behind tight security expressed an essential psychological truth. (156)

Solzhenitsyn's deep-seated desire to retain his "Russophile" nature reflects itself in strange ways. This writer had arranged for tuition in Russian for his children — Ermolai, Ignat and Stepan. He wished to help them strike roots in the native culture before exposing them to American schools. Scammell identifies this as "one expression of his fierce attachment to the mother country — and of his determination
to return to it one day" (154). He also perceives why the Vermont landscape is very conducive to Solzhenitsyn's Russianness:

Solzhenitsyn's love for Russia is passionate and profound. It is the deepest emotion of his life, and Vermont, if anything, given its superficial resemblances to his homeland only intensifies his nostalgia. (157)

It is this national consciousness which Solzhenitsyn strives to preserve amidst the Western socio-political pressures, and for this he has often been accused of propounding some kind of "way back". The Western informants misinterpret the hope of the Russians for a better life as "Russian chauvinism" (The Mortal Danger 33).

The West damns the aspiration of those who wish to progress with the help of their national consciousness as "Russian messianism" which is "fanatical" or fuelled by "militant nationalism" (33). Solzhenitsyn very sternly and assuredly states that "it seems inconceivable to me that in our sordid age any people on earth would have the gall to deem itself 'chosen'" (The Mortal Danger 34). Here one detects a tension in Solzhenitsyn's perception. In Rebuilding Russia Solzhenitsyn foretold the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it did happen. The implications of the downfall must surely have strengthened his intuitive, perhaps subconscious belief in
himself as a prophet. The increasing concern for his people must have also equally strengthened his conscious call of "historic Russian messianism." This subconscious "messianism" of Solzhenitsyn bears more relevance to his emigre phase. Especially in the present context of his return to his homeland, it has even become obvious. Solzhenitsyn resolutely assures people of his belief in bringing about a "spiritual revival" in Russia (Vladimir Radyuhin 24). Solzhenitsyn's self-contradictory position is influenced by the external historical forces.

The "Russian national consciousness", a dream of the Slavophiles and Russian patriots, is not conducive to the West's relationship with the Communist Russia. The West, in fact, had helped the Communist Regime by suppressing this "consciousness." Communism has put down this revival, which also explains the wholesale executions especially Christians who professed a "national rebirth" (The Mortal Danger 34).

The Western politics in relation to Russia includes its ignorance of mass-murder by Communists. Solzhenitsyn lists the errors of the West in overlooking controversial issues right from East Berlin to the Cambodian genocide. He speaks with authentic and shrewd political acumen when he warns that Communism will not desist from its attempts to seize the world. Therefore he calls the Communist aggressors' takeover
as the "mortal danger" and the West's negligence as suicidal. Let us examine how right Solzhenitsyn has been.

When we speak of American diplomacy, we are immediately reminded of the American foreign policy during the Cold War period. By the end of the Second World War, the amicable relations between the USSR and US, the British empire were replaced by an atmosphere of suspicion. There was a prolonged state of tension between the East and the West. The decade after 1945 ushered in the first phase of the Cold War which lasted till the 1980s. There was no open fighting but rival blocs attacked each other through other means — propaganda, economic measures, and a staunch attitude of non-cooperation. The term 'Cold War' was first used by the American President Harry Truman (1894-1972) in a US Congress debate on March 12 1947, promising help to free people who resist attempted takeovers by "armed minorities or by outside pressures" (Cook and Stevenson, The Longman Book of World History Since 1914 422). It was implied that the US would intervene wherever the USSR attempted a "direct encroachment." The major crises during the Cold War were the Berlin blockade of 1948, the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, and of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The Western reaction to these "supposed manifestations of Soviet expansion" was "tempered by the British and French involvement in Suez in 1956", the "US involvement in Vietnam during the
1960s and early 1970s" (Cook and Stevenson 422). The Gorbachev ascendancy in Russia and the "events of 1989" are seen as marking the end of the Cold War.

The American foreign policy during the Cold War period was sharply focused on checking the spread of Communism in the far-East by aiding anti-Communist forces in places like Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia. But all such attempts met with repeated rebuffs. The Americans' encounter with the Communist forces in all these regions proved self-defeating, even disastrous for American national pride. Let us look at a few instances.

After the Communist victory in China, Korea was steeped in a civil war, the country having been divided into two zones in 1945 towards the end of the Second World War. The country was occupied by the Japanese from 1910-45, during which period it was divided. The land to the North of the 38th parallel was taken by USSR, while the US took the South. Avoiding the possibility of a reunification of this country became a part of the Cold War politics. In the South elections were held, supervised by the UN and the independent Republic of Korea (Rok) or South Korea was formed in August 1948 with Syngman Rhee as president, having Seoul as its capital. In September, the Russians for their part created the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or North Korea, installing a Communist
government under Kim Il Sung, with Pyongyang as the capital. Norman Lowe points out that in 1949 a "potentially dangerous situation" resulted from the withdrawal of Russian and American troops (Mastering Modern World History 219), with both leaders fighting over their claims to rule the country. In 1950 North Korean troops invaded South Korea on June 25th leading to the intervention of UN troops, following "an emergency session of the Security Council," which was boycotted by the USSR (Cook and Stevenson 436). On October 1st in 1950, the UN forces advanced into North Korea and this brought the Chinese into the war on July 27th, 1953. In 1972 talks about a reunification began, but Korea remains divided. This war was disastrous for Korea, with a death toll of about four million Korean civilians and soldiers. America gloated over its containment of the spread of Communism. China, under American influence, had prevented Korean reunification and emerged as a world power. The Communist faction "denounced the UN as a capitalist tool" (Lowe 221).

Another victim of the American – Russian conflict was Cuba. One of the high points of the Cold War drama was the "Cuban Missile Crisis." In 1959 Fidel Castro replaced the dictator Batista. The US turned against Cuba when they discovered in 1962 that Russia had based her missiles in Cuba. On October 22nd, 1962, President Kennedy openly announced on the television the discovery of Soviet missiles and said that
he was "imposing a quarantine on Cuba to prevent the shipment of further offensive weapons" (Cook and Stevenson 424). When a nuclear threat seemed imminent, negotiations were initiated. On October 28th Khrushchev took steps to remove the missiles and Kennedy withdrew his quarantine and "agreed not to invade Cuba" (Cook and Stevenson 424).

In Vietnam, a drama similar to that of Korea was played after the country got her independence from the French in 1954. Vietnam was divided into the Communist north and a non-Communist south. The Communist North Vietnam assisted the rebels when they fought in the South against a corrupt government. The South was aided by the Americans whose ulterior motive was to curb the spread of Communism. In 1973 the US withdrew their troops after a sordid military engagement and the South Vietnamese forces collapsed, and Vietnam became one under a Communist government in 1975. Soon neighbouring Cambodia and Laos also turned Communist. American involvement in Vietnam faced a severe backlash at home. Norman Lowe pertinently comments that apart from "being a blow to American prestige, her failure had a profound effect on American society" and her "involvement in the war was seen in many circles as a terrible mistake . . ." (228).
From these several examples we realize the extent to which the Cold War politics degenerated. Solzhenitsyn's reactions as a thinker to such events find their expression in his non-fictional works like *The Mortal Danger* and to a lesser extent in *Rebuilding Russia*. The Western foreign policy stands indicted when he summons up a series of events ignored by the West. The West "forgave East Berlin" (1953) as well as Budapest and Prague", and believed in the "peaceful intentions of North Korea" and "nobility of North Vietnam" (45). The West, Solzhenitsyn charges, "seized on the myth of a progressive Cuba . . . . and put its faith in the alleged key to salvation represented by Eurocommunism", and "tried for almost two years not to notice the seizure of Afghanistan" (45). To Solzhenitsyn "the whole thrust of American diplomacy has been directed to postponing any conflict, even at the cost of progressively diminishing American strength" (47-48). He detects a new dimension in "current American foreign policy" which helps the Americans in implementing their moves to put down Russian national consciousness, and make it "surrender" to "its communist taskmaster" (49). In *The Mortal Danger* he critiques not only the American foreign policy but also that of the Soviet Union. Bearing in mind the Communist regimes in China and Korea, he states that "to cast in one's lot with the communist leadership is to repudiate not only one's own nation but humankind itself" (31). In one of his chapters in *The
Mortal Danger, "What My Letter to the Soviet Leaders Attempted to Do", Solzhenitsyn insists that in the "sphere of foreign policy", he "foresaw" the following: The Russians were not to concern themselves with the "fortune of other hemispheres"; they were to give up "world domination", "Mediterranean aspirations" and "abandon the financing of South American revolutionaries" (56); Africa had to be left in place and Soviet troops had to withdraw from Eastern Europe so that "these puppet regimes should be left to face their own people without the support of Soviet divisions . . ." (57). Similar proposals have already been made in his Letter to the Soviet Leaders (1974).

We learn from The Mortal Danger and Letter to the Soviet Leaders that Solzhenitsyn does not quite favour the way in which both the American and Soviet foreign policy had operated. Even in his recently published Rebuilding Russia he asks: "how long shall we continue supplying and propping up the tyrannical regimes we have implanted the world over, regimes that are incapable of supporting themselves and which are nothing if not insatiable squanderers of our wealth: Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, North Korea" (27).

We noted earlier that in The Mortal Danger Solzhenitsyn refers to America's efforts to stifle the Russian national consciousness. America behaves in the same way with China on
the issue of "national feelings". The rift between Russia and China is kept alive by the West in the hope of preserving its own security but it fails to understand that Western security depends on "factors" beyond its control (21).

Solzhenitsyn is equally unsparing in criticizing the domestic policy adopted by his own government. The former Soviet Union had cleverly exploited "national feelings" to suit its purpose. For example, it suppressed it at normal times, and invoked it during war times to win over the faith of the Russians. Solzhenitsyn pinpoints the exact moment in history when Communism succeeded in "saddling Russian nationalism" (The Mortal Danger 38). The period referred to is the final phases of the Second World War (1941-45). Solzhenitsyn bitterly recalls that "it was then that communism first succeeded in saddling and bridling Russian nationalism", and is aghast that "it took place in full view of the rest of the world" when "the murderer saddled his half-dead victim..." (38-39). But sadly enough the Russians were caught between the Communists and the Germans, caught between "two ferocious adversaries" (41). The Russians had hoped that they would be helped by the Germans out of the Stalinist oppression but their belief crashed. In this critical situation Russian nationalism had but one choice — to resign itself to communism. The role of the West at this very critical juncture in Russian history also betrays the self-centredness of the
West. In this situation, the West fully supported the Communist regime with the sole motive of saving itself from Germany. Communist Russia was forgiven for its grave mistakes committed in its historical process. Russia, greeted with "unanimous enthusiasm," became an "object of infatuation" because "this saddle horse was then saving the Western world from Hitler" (39). Solzhenitsyn realizes how the Western informants cheapened the very notion of "Russian nationalism" in expressing their abhorrence of the same. Solzhenitsyn uses the apt metaphor of a saddled horse to demonstrate how Communism took over Russian nationalism, and how this whole deplorable affair stemmed from the vested interests of the West. Juxtaposing the two adversaries, the Communists and Germans, Solzhenitsyn views them as "hammer and anvil" (41). He shows how the Russians were forced to take up sides with the Communists in the name of nationalism. Russian nationalism was thus "forced to don the saddle and bridle of Communism" (41). Russia's victory in "this ill-starred war served only to tighten the yoke about our necks" (41).

Solzhenitsyn, though himself belonging to the class of emigres at the time of writing The Mortal Danger, exposes the way in which Russian emigres are themselves sources of misinformation. This testifies to his committed nationalist feelings. Many of the Russian emigres simply assume scholarship on Russian history. They usually include
professors and Russian specialists. They never disclose the mass-extirpations in Russia nor its "militant atheism" (23). They accuse fellow Russians of wrong-headed nationalist sentiments which only help misrepresent the spiritual dimension of life in Russia. In short "Soviet people are portrayed as nothing but sheep" (24). The emigrés connive with American historiographers in tampering with earlier Russian history. Solzhenitsyn cites the examples of Dimitri Simes and Alexander Yanov. Till 1972 Dimitri Simes was a staff member of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow. He emigrated to USA to take up the post of Director of Soviet Studies at Georgetown University's Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Alexander Yanov emigrated in 1974 and had been associated with the Institute of International Studies, University of California at Berkeley. Solzhenitsyn is sore that for seventeen years Yanov had not spoken against the Regime but once in the West he "glibly regales his credulous American readers with distorted pictures of Soviet life" (25), or else deals with Russian history at a superficial level. Yanov "imputes to Russian national awareness two mutually exclusive tendencies", namely "messianism" and "isolationism" (25). For their part the Western correspondents also are means of misrepresentation, who rely on speculations from diplomats, off-record comments, chance meetings with foreigners and the like. They
dare to form an image from this. When a piece of information does not tally with the version in possession of the Western press, it is suppressed. Solzhenitsyn gives the examples of Igor Shafarevich's interview with Christopher Wren for "The New York Times" which was not published (27). The Western press ignored the crisis in Russia where the peasantry had been destroyed and national feelings were diminishing. Solzhenitsyn applauds the resilience of the Russian national spirit despite its being trampled both by the Communists and the West. He sarcastically states:

In the first revolution (1917-1920), Lenin's curved dagger slashed at the throat of Russia. Yet Russia survived. In the second revolution (1929-1931) Stalin's sledgehammer strove to pound Russia to dust. Yet Russia survived. The third and final revolution is irrevocably underway, with Brezhnev's bulldozer bent on scraping Russia from the face of the earth.

He adds in sheer disgust, "And at this moment, when Russian nationhood is being destroyed without pity, the Western media raise a hue and cry about the foremost threat to the world today — Russian national consciousness . . . ." (28). Solzhenitsyn here uses powerful images of destruction (dagger, sledgehammer, bulldozer), to bring out the increasing intensity of the crisis that engulfed Russia from 1917. But the short sentence "Yet Russia survived", contrasts itself
with the earlier images, and affirms the innate potentiality of Russia. The image of every weapon is symbolic of each tyrant/dictator and ironically, it is aimed at the very people the Revolution was supposed to save.

Solzhenitsyn uses the pretext of his *The Mortal Danger* to explain or clear himself of the various charges levelled at him. In the West Solzhenitsyn's precarious situation forces him to maintain a balance between his exile/emigre' status which almost makes him out to be a malcontent and his rooted patriotic sense which is spiritual at core. When his works find a hostile reception he feels obliged to respond, meeting the criticisms on their own grounds.

Solzhenitsyn has been accused of advocating the creation of a "theocratic" state. He refutes this as a "flagrant misrepresentation". His contention is that the State should not persecute religion (*The Mortal Danger* 63). He believes that "religion should make an appropriate contribution to the spiritual life of the nation" (63-64). He denies having "said or written anything" (63) that the government should be under the control of religious leaders and remarks that the act of governing "in no sense belongs to the sphere of religion . . ." (63). Solzhenitsyn cites Poland and Israel as examples, where religion contributes to a nation's spirituality. He poses a question as to why this is
forbidden "in Russia - a land that has carried its faith through ten centuries and earned the right to it by sixty years of suffering and the blood of millions of laymen and tens of thousands of clergy" (64).

Solzhenitsyn also cites the Western attempts to project him as "a fanatic, a man possessed, a mind split apart, a cynic, a vindictive war monger" (The Mortal Danger 64). We may say that he is "fanatic" and "possessed" but only with Russian patriotism. Nevertheless Solzhenitsyn acknowledges that the Harvard speech had "rewarded" him "with an outpouring of favourable responses from the American public at large" (64), and for this reason, he "was not perturbed by the outburst of reproaches that an angry press rained down" on him (64).

Another grave accusation against him is that he fiercely called upon the West to free the Russians from the Communists. He categorically refutes this: "... never once in all my public statements over the years have I appealed for help to a single Western government or parliament" (65). This much is true of Solzhenitsyn's defence. His claim that he has always maintained the stance, "We shall liberate ourselves" (65) rings true. He advises the West not to force Russia into dictatorship and not to betray millions as in 1945. He warns in the accent of a preacher of a homile: "... take care lest your headlong retreat lead you into a pit from which there is no climbing out" (65).
Solzhenitsyn's warning to the Western world indicates his progress from an earlier position (where Stalinism was his main concern) to his care at present for the entire civilization. He visualizes Communism's cancerous capability within Russia as well as in the West, in fact the whole world.

For the "multinational" people within the Soviet Union, he sees two choices — either a development of Communism with suppression of countries in other parts of the world, or a total giving up of Communist ideology and a shift to a "path of reconciliation, recovery, love of one's country, and care for one's people" (The Mortal Danger 55). The world does not understand the Russians' attempt to free themselves from the clutches of a monstrous regime. This, Solzhenitsyn confesses, was what prompted him to write his Letter to the Soviet Leaders. And it met with no response from the Russian side, concedes Solzhenitsyn in The Mortal Danger. The American and Western press viewed Solzhenitsyn's programme as "conservative, retrograde, isolationist, and as a tremendous threat to the world" (57). Solzhenitsyn in his Latter to the Soviet Leaders had suggested that people who wished to secede in Russia should be free to do so and Russia should concentrate on its internal problems. This was interpreted as "reactionary" and "dangerous isolationism" (57). Here Solzhenitsyn differentiates between the "isolationism" of the United States and that of the Soviet Union, commenting that
the former's withdrawal (as world's chief defender) would be dangerous to world peace in general, but the latter's (as world's chief assailant) would be beneficial. Solzhenitsyn denies having proposed any kind of "total isolationism" (58) but only "envisaged an ascent from the material and moral danger in which the people find themselves today" (58).

In The Mortal Danger Solzhenitsyn defines his position as neither that of a "political scientist" nor of a "politician", but simply that of "an artist who is distressed by the painfully clear events and crises of today" (60). He has painted the political, social, cultural and religious facets of this crisis in The Mortal Danger, "Harvard Address" and, earlier in his Letter to the Soviet Leaders. The root cause is totalitarianism. Totalitarianism has dominated the Soviet regime alone, not the several other countries whose governments have been authoritarian, not even China to this extent. Solzhenitsyn suggests an alternative: "the only path down from the icy cliff of totalitarianism that I could propose was the slow and smooth descent via an authoritarian system" (59). In The Mortal Danger he quotes from his own Letter to the Soviet Leaders, where he explains his concept of "authoritarianism:" He had opted for "an authoritarian order founded on love of one's fellowman"; "an authoritarianism with a firm basis in laws that reflect the will of the people"; "a calm and stable system" which does not "degenerate into
arbitrariness and tyranny"; a renunciation, "once and for all, of psychiatric violence and secret trials, and of that brutal, immoral trap which the camps represent"; the toleration of all religions; "free art and literature, the untrammled publication of books" (qtd. in *The Mortal Danger* 59).

Such a proposal has also met with severe criticism from the Western press. But this writer's stance has never wavered and his unyielding position has often been ridiculed as reactionary, orthodox, dogmatic and didactic.

Solzhenitsyn refers to the traditional Russian concepts which the outsiders should not scoff at. May be Solzhenitsyn's obsession with telling the 'truth' about the totalitarian regime goes back to the deep-rooted Russian tradition. Much importance has been given to the "medieval Russian concept of justice (the meaning of the word *Pravda* in medieval Russia).

Out of this rich tradition Solzhenitsyn draws the strength to counter the West.

**Emigré Looking Ahead: Whither the Soviet Union?**

Solzhenitsyn has been in conscious dialogue with the history of Russia, going as far back as the pre-revolutionary period. In the third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* he declares: "I was aware of the whole world not as something beckoning to me from outside, but as something experienced and
assimilated, entirely within myself, so that nothing remained for me to do but write about it" (441). This internalization of history, past and present (with a perceptive sense of the future) crystallized in his small but very constructive book Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals (1991). The opening section of the book "First Priorities" is a systematic portrait of the existing socio-political and economic condition of the Soviet Union; and the second section "Looking Ahead" has Solzhenitsyn's proposal to rebuild the structures of the government. One has only to recall that Rebuilding Russia was written before the collapse of the Soviet Union to realize the reach of Solzhenitsyn's prophetic vision. The problems to be faced in the period of transition before the formation of a new form of government are also sketched out.

Even at the very beginning of the work Solzhenitsyn predicts:

The way things are moving in our country, the "Soviet Socialist Union" will break up whatever we do: we have no choice, there is nothing to ponder, and it remains only to bestir ourselves in order to forestall greater misfortunes and to assure that the separation proceeds without needless human suffering and only in those cases where it is truly unavoidable. (12)
The problem of rebuilding Russia is dealt with by Solzhenitsyn at several levels. In the chapter "Urgent Measures for the Russian Union", he calls for an ending of the production of weapons, a change of heart by the bureaucrats, the withdrawal of the Party from involvement in the economy, a public repentance of the Party, and the dismantling of the Cheka — KGB (28-29). What is proposed is a positive reconstruction, exactly the opposite of what has been witnessed in the history of the Soviet Union, at least from the post-revolutionary period.

Solzhenitsyn's very proposal to break up the centralising authority of the erstwhile Soviet Union is a protest against the monologic hegemony of power. His vouchsafing for the participation of the commonman in the country's politics is a new egalitarian spirit. His concern for the peasant community (a marginalised sector from the Lenin period) reflects his Slavophile tendency. His stand against the authoritative temper of the Soviet government till the breakup of the Union of Republics speaks for his conviction that a centralization of the Republics will be a hindrance to the growth of the nation. Solzhenitsyn asserts that

We must strive not for the expansion of the state, but for a clarity of what remains of our spirit. By separating off twelve republics, by this seeming
sacrifice, Russia will in fact free itself for a precious inner development . . . (15)

This concentration upon Russia's inner development is strongly evident in Solzhenitsyn's earlier work also (eg. Letter to the Soviet Leaders). In Rebuilding Russia Solzhenitsyn grants that an ultimate form of government cannot be suggested, but only tentative proposals can be made. After reviewing three electoral systems (ie) "proportional representation, plurality voting, and voting based on an absolute majority" (60), he then formulates the creation of the new "Zemstvo system" (74), in which candidates hail from the local residences — the countryside (Zemstvo means 'all union' [76]). He hopes that "control will finally be turned over to individuals with real knowledge" (87). Under the first system, the parties select their candidates and "in the process individual candidates are stripped of personal responsibility vis-a-vis the voter and made responsible to the party alone, while voters are deprived of the ability to pick a candidate they trust rather than a party" (60). Under the "plurating voting system", "unnatural compromises between parties . . . in the form of pre-election alliances" can take place (63). The party or faction that is "even slightly ahead . . . receives the lion's share of the seats, while those trailing even by a tiny margin can lose everything." Solzhenitsyn believes that this system "provides for a stable government" (62). The "absolute-majority
electoral system" which Solzhenitsyn points out as being introduced in Russia, "excludes the smaller parties but makes it possible to bargain for votes between the first and second round of voting" (62). And he talks about the creation of the "Duma" as a "Consultative Body" (85). The term "Duma" denotes an elected Parliament. Solzhenitsyn is convinced that "moral principles must take priority over legal ones" (89). Solzhenitsyn's inward visionary leanings are evident when he declares that "the strength or weakness of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialization" (44). Setting spirituality above politics, he opines that "A nation devoid of spirituality cannot be sustained by a perfect government . . . a tree with a rotten core cannot stand" (45).

This ethical vision has been a central force in Solzhenitsyn's thinking at all times. Whether he approaches the pre-revolutionary Russia, or post-revolutionary Russia or contemporary Russia, this vision has never been diluted. Solzhenitsyn also views the Church as capable of helping Russia's "social recovery" but only when the "Church finds the strength to free itself completely from the yoke of the state and to restore a living bond with the people . . ." (47). The state formed after the 1917 Revolution exerted its influence over the entire country. It created its own Regime which played God. The state which Marx said "will wither away" only
grew in stature to be concretized. Among its victims, Russia's most redeeming ally religion must be counted. Solzhenitsyn's well thought-out plan for a regeneration of Russia envisages a society based on authoritarianism but tempered with love, faith in religion and morality. A co-participation of opposing factors of love and authority seems idealistic but is not impractical. This need for tempering is extended to politics also. Solzhenitsyn holds that politics is not the basic mode of human life and he is not persuaded that it is much sought after by majority of the people. He for one believes that the more energetic the political activity in a country, the greater is the loss to spiritual life. Politics must not swallow up all of people's spiritual and creative energies. Beyond upholding its rights, mankind must defend its soul, freeing it for reflection and feeling. (44)

Solzhenitsyn's unique approach to Russian history and politics lies in his blending the interests of mundane power with matters of the spirit. This preoccupation with the transcendental force is reflected in almost all his works. Though this is seen even in the earlier works, it emerges more vividly during the later phase. In Rebuilding Russia Solzhenitsyn once again reiterates that "only self-limitation will make possible the continued survival of the ever proliferating and ever more tightly packed human race", and is
"above all necessary for the individual himself, for a sense of balance and tranquillity in his soul" (48).

No doubt Solzhenitsyn's *Rebuilding Russia* has come to bear so much relevance to contemporary Russia. But owing to the fact that this work was conceived from the West, though it speaks specifically about rebuilding Russia, it explores several socio-political issues that are central to any nation, East or West. Some of them which Solzhenitsyn derives from his vast experience relate to any country, not only Russia (for example, his notion that "Moral principles must take priority over legal ones" [89]). *Rebuilding Russia* presupposes a decimated Russia. In the work, the cause and the means of redemption are set forth. Solzhenitsyn's conviction cannot be missed when he declares:

Whatever we undertake, whatever aspect of contemporary political life we choose to reflect upon, none of us can expect any positive results as long as our cruel will pursues only our self-interest, overlooking even the humblest kind of morality, to say nothing of absolute justice. (25)

Being in the West he is in a position to survey the history of the world at a broader level. Hence he is confident enough to comment that the "twentieth century continues to be convulsed and warped by a politics that has liberated itself from all moral criteria" (23). This leads him to suggest that "It is
high time to seek loftier forms of statehood, based not only on self-interest but also on compassion" (23).

Rebuilding Russia, although written in the West, reveals the amazing fact that Solzhenitsyn has sustained his patriotic fervour by doughtily resisting for nearly twenty years the Western influences. He has maintained his position as a Russian devoted to Russia, but very much against the 'totalitarian and Communist Russia'. He is somewhat vehement in his possible response to any offence against Russians' nationality: "... nothing can restrain us in our state of chronic submission: with furious courage we snatch up stones, clubs, spears and guns and fall upon our neighbour, intent on murder and arson" (10). Solzhenitsyn is confident that "nothing has the capacity to convince us that our hunger, our poverty, our early deaths, the degeneration of our children — that any of these misfortunes can take precedence over national pride" (10).

But in the event of an imminent break up of the Soviet Union, he counsels that

"Taking pride" is not what we need to do, nor should be we attempting to impose ourselves on the lives of others. We must, rather grasp the reality of the acute and debilitating illness that is affecting our people, and pray to God that He grant us recovery, along with the wisdom to achieve it. (17)
Solzhenitsyn the Intellectual

An intellectual with a firm grip on contemporary affairs has a far-reaching insight into the future and takes upon himself the moral responsibility of pointing out the pitfalls on the way. He is the conscience of society, but not subservient to it. People expect an intellectual to critique society, but never welcome him if he turns a preacher. It is quite disheartening to note that "from its inception, the word 'intellectual' had the connotation of a compulsive malcontent, a misfit, whose demand for moral authority was impeded neither by modesty nor scientific standards" (Lewis Feuer, Ideology and the Ideologists 206).

Notwithstanding various strands of influences on his thinking, Solzhenitsyn proves in his own right his status as an intellectual émigré. The West has severely criticized him, but has nevertheless regarded him as an intellectual of a high order. Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova are not far wrong in observing that "in the West, Solzhenitsyn appears a Utopian prophet or a religious moralist" (73).

Though the accusations of the West against Solzhenitsyn have been countered by him in a work like The Mortal Danger, the criticism by the West has definitely not deterred Solzhenitsyn's vision about Russia, and the world. This resilience and firmness of thought and perception can be also
interpreted as didacticism, dogmatism and puritanism. It cannot be denied that all these elements do find a place in the making of this intellectual, but all these elements alone do not characterize the entire Solzhenitsyn. He is different from every other notable dissident. In an interview with Janis Sapiets published as "Conversation with Solzhenitsyn" (1975), Solzhenitsyn clarifies his position. When the dissident Sakharov contends that "ideology" is dead, Solzhenitsyn concedes it only to argue that the evil of ideology lives on. He says that "our souls are in the claws of this ideology" (67). He reminds us that Sakharov is unaware of and blind to the underlying fact of "ideology" being a "lie". He refers to Sakharov's interest in the intervention of the West in Russia. Sakharov believes that "if Western Capital is put into the exploitation" of "national resources, Russia will immediately prosper" (qtd. in Sapiets 69). On the other hand Solzhenitsyn offers an alternative:

... all we have to do is renounce the ideology, stop supporting it, and the state system will collapse by itself — it has nothing to hold on to but ideology, it will transform itself, become different. (Sapiets 72)

Solzhenitsyn, as an intellectual of great calibre and complexity, has proved himself to be a Russian to the core. His exile in the West has created controversies but that has only succeeded in inviting greater attention to issues
hitherto ignored, sometimes wilfully, sometimes unconsciously. His evaluation of Russian history with its larger implications denotes the inevitability of a reevaluation of the World history. Solzhenitsyn's message is not merely Russian but human: "I can envision no salvation for mankind other than through the universal exercise of self-limitation by individuals and peoples alike" (The Mortal Danger 67).