INTRODUCTION

The colonial system of imperialism is a part of the world capitalist structure, which evolved at the turn of the nineteenth century, in the final stage of the territorial division of the world. However, the early adventures of European colonialism in the "Dark Continent" were not more than the endeavors to clear path for "commerce and Christianity". Thus the early colonialism in Africa was somewhat covertly operated under the sublimed banner of "divine mission" to bring civilization to the "dark continent". However, it soon assumed naked proportions which finally epitomized in the great "scramble for Africa", when the "magnificent cake of Africa" was formally sliced and distributed among the competing colonial powers. Thus, by 1884-85 Berlin Congress, which divided the colonial map of Africa, the respective 'sphere of exploitation' was almost institutionalized.

But with the beginning of 20th century, a powerful anti-colonial wave began to surface sporadically in the colonial world, as a result of multitude of factors. Although, Africa, in comparison to other continents, witnessed a very late emergence of these upsurges and it was not until the Second World War that anti-colonial movements took a definite shape and attained an accelerated pace in Africa. So far, Soviet attitude towards these movements was concerned, the very fact
that Soviet Union had a historically frail levels of interaction with
Africa, confines Soviet attitude to mere a ceremonial importance, specially during the embryonic stage of these movements.

However, the research dissertation, sought to uncover deep-seated crisis of colonialism and Soviet attitude towards anti-colonial movements at different epochs of historical development. The thesis is divided into five chapters on the basis of ‘operational space’ of Soviet Union during the last five decades. However, in order to analyze the colonial problem in its explicit historical elaboration, a brief anatomy of colonial structure along with its corresponding Marxist theoretical responses are also taken into account.

The first chapter, “Colonial Question in Soviet Ideology: A Marxist-Leninist Discourse”, would attempt to provide an initial survey of the doctrinal developments of Marxian epistemology on the subject with a view to draw some provisional conclusions as to the nature of Marxist theoretical responses to the colonial crisis in its critical context. Although, the discursiveness of Marxian epistemology on the subject, defies easy categorization, primarily because of its scattered and diffused homogeneity and secondly because of its hermeneutical uncertainty over the very nature of colonial question as a ‘subject’ or ‘object’ of history. This doctrinal ambivalence often gained its natural manifestation in the vacillation of Marxist
ideologues from one conclusion to other, especially in elucidating its Primus locus as 'positive' or negative 'phenomenon'.

The analogously Euro-centric orientation of early Marxist theoretical constructs, allowed only an epiphenomenal ontological position of colonial crisis, falling outside the main etiology of Marxism. In corollary, decolonialization was never a teleological end in Marxist philosophy, rather it was mere a means to accelerate the historically predestined collapse of capitalist structure. Lenin's attempt to reformulate colonial theory without disturbing the basic tenets of his ideological predecessors was a clever attempt to restructure the classical Marxist outlook in congruity with the 20th century colonialism, which was fast assuming global characteristics.

However, the instrumental relegation of colonial crisis to the broader concerns of 'revolutionizing the globe', led the Soviet theorists to interpret the colonial crisis in terms of its 'objective content' in fulfilling the Soviet revolutionary optimism. This trend continued in Comintern discussions where the colonial fate was swinging along the vicissitude of Soviet hopes in the one hand and phenomenal changes in the colonial world, on the other.

However, the Cold War politics had a profound bearing on the Soviet anti-colonial policies in the third world in general and Africa in
particular. The second chapter, "Soviet Policy Towards Anti-Colonial Movements in Africa", would endeavor to elucidate the complex diplomatic maneuverings of divided world along ideological lines. The positional exigencies of Soviet Union forced it to disseminate its influence in third world in general and Africa in particular to confirm its super power status. Thus, Soviet designs of anti-colonial support were calculatively structured to occupy the vast political vacuum, which was supposed to emerge after the predicted dismantling of colonial system. The accelerated anti-colonial movements might have diverted the attention of capitalist world from the Soviet front and thereby secured the existence of Soviet Union amidst constant imperialist threat.

Although, Soviet theorists were confused over their choices of movement, as one major characteristics of African anti-colonial upsurge had been the presence of parallel rival movements. Nevertheless, the impeding fear of direct capitalist confrontation had kept them covert in their support for these movements. It had been carried either through surrogates or under the defensive sublimed "international duties of Soviet Union".

However, theoretically Soviet Union supported only fraternal movements, at least avowedly. But simultaneously its support for many other regimes for example, Edi Amin, Macias, Joshua Nkomo
and others acknowledge the extreme real politik pressure on Soviet policies. The strange Soviet behaviour in several cases were mere a testimony of growing capitalist pressure on Soviet attitude which forced them to ignore the 'professed doctrinal objectives' sometimes.

Soviet ideological contortionism was part of their wooing strategy to incorporate the vast colonial demographic space in the bigger historical antagonism. Moreover, Soviet theoretical optimism, which saw the third world, as naturally aligning with socialist forces and the transformation of their society into socialist structure were also kept in mind. The acceleration of Soviet anti-colonial activities after the fall of Portuguese colonialism was attributed to this fact.

However, with the fall of the last colonial vestiges in South Africa and the snowballing of Soviet Union's own predicaments at both international as well as domestic level demanded a more pragmatic approach. Consequently, by mid 1980s, anti-colonial movements had been pushed to periphery by Soviet scholars, which finally disappeared after the fall of 'white minority regime' in South Africa.

The third chapter, "South Africa As a Factor in Soviet Policy Towards Southern Africa" seeks to analyze the South African variable as a major determinant of Soviet policy towards Southern Africa. The
complexly intermitted diplomacy of Southern Africa where South African status as a 'regional hegemon' was presenting a serious threat to the Soviet gains in the region, never allowed them to ignore South Africa in their policy formulations.

Meanwhile, Soviet persistent effort to save the 'Socialist outposts'. Angola and Mozambique against the severe existential threats from South Africa was major concern of Soviet policy. Apart from it, South African image in the soviet eye as a conduit of West was also instrumental in bringing the Soviet attention to South Africa. South Africa was consistently exhibiting hostile overtures not only in Angola and Mozambique but also in Namibia and Zimbabwe where soviet supported movements SWAPO and ZANU had been consistently under threat of 'West-South African alliance'.

However, the third chapter would analyze the diplomacy of Soviet support exclusively in Namibia and Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwean case Soviet diplomatic maneuverings were revolving around its general support for ZAPU which was SWAPO in Namibian case. Soviet support for these movements reveals the fact that Soviet primary interests were undermining the Western and Chinese influence in the region, more than anything else.
In Namibian case Soviet efforts were more directed towards discrediting the Western negotiational designs rather than resolving the crisis as such. As entire Soviet diplomacy in Namibia, throughout its support to SWAPO, arbitrated around defying the West maneuvered peaceful settlements, which might have seriously jeopardized the scope and intensity of Soviet influence in the solution of Namibian crisis. Precisely for this reason the diplomatic manipulations of 'Contact Group' were a constant target of Soviet publications.

In Zimbabwe, Soviet Union chose to bolster an overt 'Bourgeoisie nationalist' Joshua Nkomo in place of an avowed Marxist Robert Mugabe. The deep rooted cause of Soviet allotheism was Mugabe's close ties with China where Mugabe's reluctance to withdraw its connections from China was taken by Moscow as a serous challenge to its power and prestige. On the other hand Nkomo's compromising attitude and his unwillingness to run own show out of Soviet influence made him almost a natural ally, worthy of Soviet support.

Chapter entitled, "Soviet Policy Towards Anti-colonial and Anti-apartheid Movements in South Africa" would attempt to provide an anatomic analysis of Soviet support for African National Congress along with South African Communist Party who had waged a war against white minority regime. The soviet support for anti-colonial and
anti-racist movements in South Africa was guided by imperatives of its high hopes which it had embedded in South African movement. Amongst all fraternal movements in the region, Soviet Union was especially optimistic about proletarianization of South Africa where 'objective conditions' required least dexterity.

A country with a large proletariat and the oldest communist party in the continent, were promising a brighter revolutionary gain for Soviet Union. However, Soviet support for ANC had been negligible before 1960s on account of several reasons. It was only after the intensification of struggle during early 1960s when ANC-SACP collaboration launched an armed struggle against Pretorian regime that Soviet Union came out substantial support to the movement.

The merger of SACP and ANC interest did not only purged out the 'chronic Soviet dilemma'—whether to support nationalist or communist forces but also increased the chances of gradual takeover of nationalist leadership by socialist forces. Moscow had kept ANC, instead of SACP its natural ally, in front while propagating its assistance. The one reason for this Soviet tactics was to nullify the Western criticism of Soviet covert goals of 'social imperialism' while on the other the general support for ANC was enhancing its claim of
being a natural supporter of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements.

But by the mid-1980s, Soviet thinkers left their hope in Socialist revolution in South Africa. Naturally it came down in Soviet priority list. Accordingly they turned toward ‘new pragmatism’, switching over to ‘peaceful political solution’ in place of ‘armed military solution’.

However, Soviet maintained a perfect balance in realizing both its ultraistic claims and egoistic national interest. As a result, desire for profit and quest for revolution went together throughout its support. Moreover, with the domestic disarray Soviet Union abandoned its revolutionary project and after Prestroika and Glasnost, third world in general slipped down in the priority list of Soviet Union.