CONCLUSION

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, represented an interaction of a special kind, qualitatively different from the relationship between the Soviet Union and other East European countries. The strength of the relationship lay in strategic political factors. Soviet interest in Yugoslavia arose markedly in the post-Stalin period, primarily because changes that took place within the region had an impact on the Soviet Union. In addition to this, the changing character of East-West relations demanded caution on the interaction for both the countries.

The independence of Yugoslavia after the Second World War under the astute leadership of Marshall Tito and the attainment of socialism without the help of the Soviet Union as it had happened in Eastern Europe was a challenge to the other socialist countries in the region. Flowing from this a series of issues and conflicts led to the split in the relationship in 1948. Yugoslavia pursued an independent policy to build socialism in a way different from the Soviet one. This assertion of independence led to Stalin's high handedness leading to economic blockade of Yugoslavia by the Eastern Bloc countries resulting in hostility between the two countries. During the period of Stalin the relationship remained in a deep chill. The relationship was normalized only after Nikitia Khrushchev made serious attempts to develop friendly relation with Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union under his leadership recognized the independence of Yugoslavia and different roads to socialism. Strategic consideration with the cold war at its
height in Europe, the Soviet Union did not wish to add to its problems. Yugoslavia's geographical proximity to Eastern Europe was crucial. But there were definite limits to Soviet attempts to befriend Yugoslavia. The military intervention in Hungary in 1956 created concern for Yugoslavia. Therefore, till 1964 the new relationship remained an uneasy one and the Yugoslav communist continued to follow an independent national policy to which the Soviet Union was trying to adjust.

A thorough examination of the developments during the period of Brezhnev unravels the fact that attempts from both sides to patch up the earlier strains and hostilities had partially succeeded. Soviet policy was ready to play its role in world affairs. It did not want to add to its list of adversaries. Yugoslavia's strategic importance to the Soviet Union continued. One of Soviet apprehensions has been that Yugoslavia's independent path could attract its allies in Eastern Europe. The Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the justification for the intervention on grounds of fraternity and solidarity to protect and promote socialism in the Bloc countries was never acceptable to Yugoslavia.

The 'Brezhnev Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty' further created suspicion among the Yugoslavs as to what extent the doctrine is applicable to the socialist countries. Yugoslavia feared what it meant for them. Therefore, the Soviet-Yugoslav relations remained uneasy until Brezhnev recognized the true independence of Yugoslavia and its road to socialism.
Between 1970-80 as mentioned earlier, it is noted that there were many occasions i.e International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties in 1969, the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the emergence of Euro-communism when the Soviet Union worked hard to win back the support of Yugoslavia to strengthen Soviet leadership in pursuing the world communist movement. There is reason to believe that the Yugoslavia did not altogether boycott these occasions or wholly support but it remained an independent country, pursuing its own road to socialism. Even the emergence of Euro-communism that was skeptical of Soviet ideological designs did not get wholehearted support of Yugoslavia. In fact, Yugoslavia was concerned with both the Soviet designs and the Euro-communists.

Despite the above differences, the Soviet-Yugoslav relation at the bilateral level was highly marked by close economic cooperation. There were a number of contracts and agreements to promote mutually beneficial trade relationship between the two countries. This was based on reciprocity and the mutual need. Nevertheless, both the countries desired closer economic cooperation. By the end of 1980s, the Soviet Union emerged as the largest trade partner of Yugoslavia.

It was at this juncture; the Soviet-Yugoslav relations remained a low key, especially after the death of President Tito in early 1980s. After President Tito’s death, the country was engulfed in ethnic problems. The leadership that emerged was unable to provide the leadership. And hence, Yugoslavia was more inward looking.
However, Gorbachev's 'new political thinking' and Perestroika ushered a new era of democratic revolution. The de-ideologisation of Soviet foreign policy within the framework of 'new political thinking' had a salutary effect on Soviet-Yugoslav relations. Old mistrust of Soviet intentions were wiped out. However, not all the differences were to be ironed out. But Gorbachev era paved the way of great co-operation. The crux of the relationship by now lay in a large area of agreement that existed at the regional level.

Therefore, it could be stated that there were reasons to see the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia establish a closer relationship than in the past. However, Soviet-Yugoslav relations could have attained greater heights, but the domestic situations of both the countries put limits on the growth of bilateral relations. The Yugoslav collective leadership failed to suppress the ongoing ethnic conflict which started taking the form of national upsurge and finally culminated in the disintegration of Yugoslavia. There is also no denying the fact that repudiation of ideology and democratization of international relations envisaged in Gorbachev's innovations in some part worked as a catalyst to ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia in general.

From the Soviet point of view, the ethnic upsurge in Yugoslavia was a matter of deep concern to the Soviet Union. It apprehended the possibility of similar developments in the Soviet Union. Therefore, despite the avenues opened up for friendly relations, the Soviet Union was unable to help out Yugoslavia. This became evident during the process of conflict-
regulations to solve the Yugo-crisis. All through the process, the Soviet Union urged for the integrity and unity of Yugoslav people and their country. But when the conflict hard pressed for the intervention of international community, the Soviet Union had no option but to see Yugoslavia disintegrated.