

The cold war affected the state of politics in australia- discuss.



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The Cold War affected the state of politics in Australia- Discuss. The Cold War was essentially a battle fought between The USSR (Russia) and The United States. On one side you had a communist state in the USSR; on the other was the capitalist US.

While there was not much warfare between the two nations the war was unique because both sides were working on creating nuclear weapons, which sparked fears of a worldwide nuclear war. While Australia was not directly involved our links with the United States found us entangled in the fight against communism. When battles did break out we found ourselves sending troops, and the climate of politics all over the world had a direct impact on how we ran our country.

The Korean War was a turning point in the Cold War. Until now the war had been a battle of ideologies, but when communist North Korea invaded the south the United States joined the fight to protect South Korea. China was also a Communist state which made it hard for the US when they were battling against two large nations in the USSR and China.

Australia sent troops to the Korean War- often known as the Forgotten War- to fight on the United States side. The Korean War was fought between 1950 and 1953, and Australia had troops present in the nation until 1957 as a peacekeeping measure. More than 1, 500 Australian Troops were killed during our time there. The Korean War had no profound impact on politics. It was early stages in the Cold War and the majority of Australians were anti communist. There was, however, a communist party set up in Australia. In

the 1949 federal election. Labor had previously been in power, but were defeated by Robert Menzies??™ Liberal Party.

The Liberal Party had a strong anti-communist stance and had been working to effectively ban the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) from operating. A bill was put forward to Parliament in 1950 (The Australian Communist Party Dissolution Bill 1950) which stated that the CPA was an unlawful organisation, and that members of the party could be jailed for up to 5 years. This was definitely a sign that the fear of communism was spreading across the world. Another major conflict the cold war produced was the Vietnam War. Communism was spreading through Asia and had reached North Vietnam. Australian forces once again sided with the US, as well as South Vietnam, against communist nations such as Russia, China and North Vietnam. From when the first Australian troops arrived in 1962 they spent ten years there, the longest military involvement Australia has had in one conflict.

The Vietnam War caused much debate among Australians, many of whom believed that our presence there was unnecessary. The sixties and seventies were a time of great revolution around the world and many anti-war protests were carried out by people who were angry that- in their eyes- the government had let 500 Australian men die for no reason. On the 18th of August 1971, nearly ten years since the start of Australia??™s involvement in the Vietnam War, our troops began to be pulled out from Vietnam. It marked a significant point in the politics not only of Australia but around the world. People who had been protesting about the war had won. American troops pulled out soon afterwards. Although the communists won the war, <https://assignbuster.com/the-cold-war-affected-the-state-of-politics-in-australia-discuss/>

and now have complete control of Vietnam, the protesters were generally not communist which is interesting to note.

This shows that people, especially in Australia, were angry that we blindly followed America into this war not knowing what the cost might be. The Petrov affair really brought the Cold War close to home. The use of spies and espionage was important in this war as it was not a physical combat but a battle of ideologies. In 1951 Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov entered Australia under the guise of being Russian diplomats. In reality they were communist spies, sent to infiltrate Government Departments and opposition political parties. They failed their tasks and Vladimir soon came to the attention of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, which had been formed not long before in 1949. Facing possible torture or death back in Russia for his failures, Vladimir chose to defect to Australia.

The Soviet embassy found out about this and accused the government of kidnapping Petrov, at the same time Evdokia returned to Russia. The Petrov Affair and the following enquiry into the events lead to another vitally important event in Australia's history - The Labor Party Split. The Catholic Church, normally a great supporter of The Labor Party, were concerned that Labour had been infiltrated by communists.

This caused a split within the party and formed a new political party - The Democratic Labor Party. The DLP gave their preferences in elections to the Coalition, helping them to stay in power until 1972 when Gough Whitlam gained power. Of all the events in the Cold War the Labour split had the most impact on politics in this country. It showed that the fear of communism had

well and truly spread through the western world. The Cold War had an impact not only on the state of politics but also on the common mindsets of the Australian public. It created much tension around the world and created a world of mistrust in politics, which was clearly evident in Australia. The Petrov Affair and Labor party split were particularly important - they confirmed the fear of communism we had inherited through our ties with the United States. Our role in the Vietnam and Korean War was also important in shaping our country's history; the events of the Cold War are some of the most important since Federation.

The effects of the war are still being felt today; we are living in a world that still has to face the possibility of Nuclear War and the devastation that could cause, a fear which began during the Cold War. BIBLIOGRAPHY: Skwirk.

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