



Perceptions of the Soviet Union in Australian political discourse between 1943 and 1950.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to assess the role of discourse about the USSR in Australian politics between 1943 and 1950. During these years, Australia experienced a period of political volatility. Despite the fact that almost every political debate in Australia at this time involved some reference to the USSR, scholars have discussed only tangentially the ways in which discourse about Soviet Russia was used for political purposes. This thesis, therefore, will address a gap in the historiography by identifying varying depictions of the Soviet Union during the early phases of the Cold War, and by examining how these depictions were used for political purposes.

This thesis is divided into three chapters, which will address case study years – 1943, 1946 and 1950. These years were chosen specifically for their significance in emphasising the contrast through time of perceptions of the Soviet Union. Beginning in 1943, a period of unparalleled optimism regarding the USSR, this dissertation analyses the events and themes which shaped opinions throughout the following seven years, concluding with the lowest point in Australian perceptions in the early-1950s. Some of the common and recurrent topics and themes for discussion are: war, life in the USSR, Soviet foreign policy and international communism. These issues will be addressed within both an international and domestic context.

A range of resources were used in the writing of this thesis to explore the changing nature of discourse about the Soviet Union. These include both the South Australian and national *Tribune* newspapers (the Communist Party of Australia digest), a range of over 60 state and national newspapers, Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates and political pamphlets. Additionally, some biographical material has been used, as well as contemporary commentaries which assist in the development and understanding of political trends and tendencies throughout the early-Cold War era.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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