

The lost generation – kidnapping in the name of the law

[Government](#)



The definition of " kidnapping" in the dictionary means: To seize and detain unlawfully and usually for ransom. Then if you continue this path and look up " ransom" you will probably find a definition written down as: The price or payment demanded or paid for such release. When I think about the Lost Generation several questions cross my mind such as: what was the ransom for the Lost Generation? Can we talk about a united Australia today?

How hard will it be for the government and population to forget this past? Are millions of dollars of compensation enough for all those terrible acts that the Church, Government and other Institutions have committed? The situation today is not much better as we hoped for. This paper will show that the racial problems in Australia are still dominant among the people. It will show what has become of the Lost Generation and all that is in contact with this horrible past, which many Australians cannot forget.

"Rabbit Proof Fence" is a movie that deals with the Lost Generation. This movie focuses on three little girls who run away from an institution that was there to educate, Christianize and force them to become slaves in the white world. These three children were half cast, hence their mother was not allowed to take care of them because she was black, and the society viewed black people to be incapable of bringing up children.

Shawn Donnan from the Christian Science Monitor reported that this movie was " the most sensitive subject in Australia's history" 1The "[governmental] policies stretched across much of the 20th century", which kept most Australians in the dark about that project of the Lost Generation. Shawn Donnan comments, " Their presence [The Lost Generation] was first brought

<https://assignbuster.com/the-lost-generation-kidnapping-in-the-name-of-the-law/>

to light for many Australians in a 1997 report. " This showed me that Australia was not yet ready to face their past.

Having learned from the accounts of the Lost Generation, it reminded me very much of the genocide and deportation of the Jews in my country, Germany. John Moriarty, was part of the " stolen generation", and in his interview in the International Herald Tribune we read that " Based on the premise that Aborigines were a doomed race and that saving the children by putting them into foster homes and providing them with the Western education was the human alternative" 2, Mr. Moriarty remembered that " It happened like a kidnapping". (Micheal Richardson)

The fact that this was federally sponsored reflects the Nationalism in Germany during the NSDAP era. From the report that was published in 1997 by the Australian Government we learned that " It detailed widespread cases of abuse in Governmental and church run institutions" (Shawn Donnan) Although this event happened sometime back there had not been a critical sense of redemption. Mr. Moriarty said that Australia's Aborigines are still the most " disadvantaged group in Australian society in terms of health, life expectancy, education, and housing and job prospects. "(Micheal Richardson) although efforts are made.

If I may compare this issue again with my history in Germany, the Germans knew what had happened and they have compensated and are still paying to many Jewish generations until today. But as we can read from the Moriarty article, Australia's " Government has refused to make an official apology for past wrong against Aborigines. (Shawn Donnan) Therefore we realize that <https://assignbuster.com/the-lost-generation-kidnapping-in-the-name-of-the-law/>

Australians are very uncomfortable with their past, and the governmental representatives do not want to look back and compensate the Aborigines for what happened.

On one hand, looking forward and forgetting the past might be good to help the nation heal from the mistakes made earlier, but on the other hand it will be hard to correct those mistakes if they do not want to face them and learn from them. The best way to learn from our mistakes is to look back and acknowledge both our successes, and failures learn from them and finally move on.

As we can see, the government represents the voice of the white majority in Australia, therefore the " legacy of Aboriginal suffering does not attract the same attention or culpability in the eyes of the wider Australian public," 3 says Ian McIntosh about the mood of the majority in his book *Aboriginal Reconciliation and the Dreaming*. What is interesting to see, is how the Aborigines felt or still feel. The Aborigines don't really agree to those statements made by their white oppressors. Mr. Moriarty said, " It was an insidious, arrogant policy that amounted to cultural genocide. " (Micheal Richardson)

In the same article we later found out that the mainstream of Aboriginal youth suffered long term physiological diseases caused during that time. The refusal of the government to apologize was another reason for the Aborigines to revolt against the present leaders. As we can note, the government of Australia is not really representing the democracy that we

hoped for. Even today, repression and making money are valued over human morals and cultures.

A clear example is the uranium mining in one of Worlds Natural Heritages. Kakadu is a national park in Arnhem Land and the government, despite international protests, is mining uranium. The government especially does not care because it is on Aboriginal Land and a speaker of the Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) commented that the " ERA will push ahead with plans for Jabiluka whether or not it is ultimately opposed by the senior Aboriginal Traditional Owner of the Land. " 4 This is just an example of how the government still treats the Aborigines today.

In the same article we learn that " government authority has been perpetuated and the Aborigines community continues to suffer appalling social and economical disadvantage. "(Kakadu) In my perspective, Australia is the last country that has not yet liberated itself of the racial issues that still exist. First it was the United States of America when blacks revolted strongly enough to demand their rights, followed by the black continent of Africa and its Apartheid. Therefore, Australia is going to be the next, and I am very positive about that.

The only thing that is missing in Australia is the courage and united strengths to fight the Government. The government has not apologized, and those Aboriginal issues " have become one of the country's rawest domestic issues. "(Shawn Donnan) This shows us clearly that this is not over yet. From my point of view, the indigenous tribes of Australia have to come closer together and fight even harder to achieve their goals. The kidnapping of the
<https://assignbuster.com/the-lost-generation-kidnapping-in-the-name-of-the-law/>

lost generation with authority of the government with no obvious ransom makes this situation very ugly.

I feel horrified in thinking that the Australian government hides behind the stanza that the past is the past. Prime Minister John Howard actually said that " for one. Argues that it is unfair to expect the current generations of Australians to apologize for abuses they had nothing to do with, and that it is more important to look forward than backward. " (Micheal Richardson) This statement gives a good impression of how the white majority community thinks about their history and their Aborigines.

In an article of the Australian Humanities Review it actually says that " The paternalism of the old Empire has not entirely disappeared in Australia in the nineties. " 5 The reporter of that same article even goes so far to say that the question of racism " will raise and rise until Australia answers them and discovers ways to make good in the present the errors committed in the past. "(Carmel Bird) Aborigines from different tribes are facing different racial problems such as the mining problem I mentioned earlier.

The mining is a very clear example of how the government still functions today. In my point of view there is no change that has happened. The government still does not really care about the lives of Aborigines and does not see them as developed. We can see that racism is still playing a very big part in Australian society. Although a lot of work is needed t heal the racial situation in Australia, I believe that the Aborigines in time will be able to fight for their rights.