

Australian Detention

Alison BASHFORD and Carolyn STRANGE (2002). "Asylum-Seekers and National Histories of Detention." Australian Journal of Politics and History 48(4): 19.

Bashford and Strange explore how the then-ongoing practice of mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Australia finds historical precedents in both wartime internment of so-called enemy aliens and in quarantine detention. Through tracing a historical genealogy of Australian carceral practices, they find that the coerced isolation of these three groups – asylum seekers, enemy aliens, and the ill - was driven by racism and fear of foreign threats. Bashford and Strange argue that the discourses justifying the contemporary Australian practice of mandatory detention of asylum seekers was motivated by a complex military/security/defense rationale while the disparate groups lobbying against the practice were united in their reliance on a liberal discourse of universal human rights to oppose the practice.

Further reading:

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