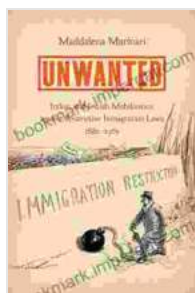


Unveiling the Hidden Chapters: Italian and Jewish Mobilization Against Restrictive Immigration Laws, 1882-1965

In the annals of American history, the fight for open immigration has been a contentious and ever-evolving struggle. Amidst the tides of exclusionary laws and nativist sentiments, two marginalized communities—Italians and Jews—emerged as unlikely allies in the battle against restrictive immigration policies.

A Legacy of Discrimination and Exclusion

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a surge in immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Italians and Jews, fleeing poverty, persecution, and political unrest, arrived in the United States in droves. However, their arrival was met with hostility and discrimination.



Unwanted: Italian and Jewish Mobilization against Restrictive Immigration Laws, 1882–1965

by Maddalena Marinari

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3073 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
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Print length : 273 pages

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Nativist groups, spearheaded by labor unions and the Ku Klux Klan, scapegoated immigrants for economic problems and social unrest. They lobbied for restrictive immigration laws that would stem the flow of "undesirable" newcomers.

The Birth of Immigrant Resistance

As discrimination mounted, Italian and Jewish communities began to organize and fight back. They formed benevolent societies, newspapers, and political clubs to support their members and advocate for their rights.

One of the earliest forms of resistance was boycotts. In 1891, Italian immigrants in New Orleans refused to buy bread from bakeries that employed Chinese workers. This boycott forced several bakeries to hire Italian immigrants.

The Power of the Press

The immigrant press played a pivotal role in mobilizing opposition to restrictive immigration laws. Italian and Jewish newspapers reported on the plight of immigrants and denounced the nativists' inflammatory rhetoric.

The "Italian-American Herald," founded in 1883, became a leading voice for Italian immigrants. It published articles that exposed the discriminatory practices of immigration officials and called for the protection of Italian immigrants' rights.

The Rise of Political Activism

As the 20th century dawned, Italian and Jewish immigrants gained political power through their growing numbers and organized activism. They elected representatives to local and national offices who championed their cause.



In 1901, the Italian-American Republican League was formed to fight against the Chinese Exclusion Act. This league became a model for other ethnic organizations dedicated to protecting the rights of immigrants.

The Long Struggle for Justice

The fight against restrictive immigration laws was arduous and protracted. Despite the setbacks and disappointments, Italian and Jewish immigrants remained steadfast in their opposition.

In 1917, the Immigration Act limited immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, including Italy and Russia. However, Italian and Jewish activists continued to push for reform.

The Immigration Act of 1965: A Milestone in Civil Rights

The passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 marked a watershed moment in the history of immigration reform. This landmark legislation abolished national origin quotas and established a more equitable system based on family reunification and skills.

The Immigration Act of 1965 was a testament to the tireless efforts of Italian and Jewish activists who had fought for decades to overcome the barriers of discrimination and exclusion.

A Legacy of Perseverance and Inclusion

The story of Italian and Jewish mobilization against restrictive immigration laws is one of courage, resilience, and the indomitable spirit of human resilience. It is a reminder that even in the face of adversity, the power of unity and activism can prevail.

Their legacy continues to inspire and guide us today as we navigate the complex and ever-changing landscape of immigration policy. By embracing the lessons of the past, we can strive to build a more inclusive and just society for all.



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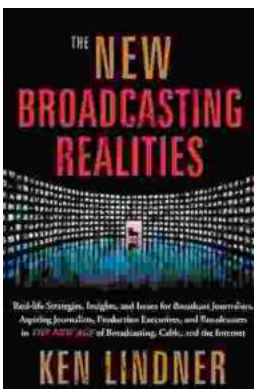
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