IMMIGRATION ATROCITIES IN THE “LAND OF OPPORTUNITY:”
THE PATH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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America has been the home to many different immigrant groups since its discovery by European explorers in the 15th century. By the mid to late 19th century, scores of people such as: Italians, Irish, Germans, Japanese, and Jewish, came to the “land of opportunity” to escape their native lands due to economic hardships, political corruption, and even religious persecution. Upon arrival, these groups would face harsh treatment from the American government and its people one way or another due to political propaganda. Some groups have received a form of reparations or another, while others have yet to receive a simple apology for their ordeals that their ancestors suffered. Various resources have been utilized to examine and understand why and how these ethnic groups were scrutinized and who was really at fault for instigating such atrocious acts. Some groups were barred from jobs, while others were taken away from their homes and placed in internment camps only because they were deemed “enemies” of the United States when WWII was fought. American was involved in of the most
controversial foreign policy decisions ever when they decided not to take in the Jews that were aboard the SS St. Louis and would cost these poor souls their lives at the hands of the Nazis.

All of these ethnic groups came to America for its opportunities such as jobs, housing, freedom from religious persecution, and the idea of living the American dream. It is a real shame that countless lives were lost during this xenophobic hysteria that took place in the democratic republic of the United States of America. There is no question that all of this could have been prevented if the government was not so ignorant with their discriminating propaganda. The bottom line was that someone like a President Roosevelt and Wilson only cared about keeping their citizens happy to do whatever means necessary in order to win their support for re-election. Instead of focusing on the safety and well-being of its citizens regardless of origin, politicians only cared about winning votes.
Italian-Americans I

I. Intro-Italians
   a. Anti-Italianism definition
   b. Anti-Italianism in the United States (in the media, stereotypes, etc)

II. Violence against Italians
    1891 lynching in New Orleans

III. Sacco and Vanzetti

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V. Post-WWII Anti-Italianism
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VI. Conclusion

Other Ethnic Groups II

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   a. Irish-Americans
   b. Anti-Irish Sentiment in the United States
   c. Stereotypes

II. Irish Immigration in America in the 19th Century
   a. Jobs
b. Reparations

III. Jews in the United States

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IV. Jews and the American Civil War

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VI. Anti-Semitism in the U.S.

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VII. Anti-German Sentiment in America

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IX. Conclusion
Made in Italy

“America, Land of the Free? Not for Italians!”

When one thinks of Italy, one thinks of the great food, culture, language, mannerisms, fancy cars, art, music and etc. These things are only a few of the great things that this enchanting peninsula has given us. On the other hand, Italy has also given us the Mafia and Benito Mussolini to name a couple of the concepts or people that were not so great. During the great wave of European immigration to the United States of America, thousands of Italians left their motherland to come and find work here and start a new life. Unfortunately for them, nobody warned them that they would go through hell just like the African Americans, the Jews, and Japanese did as a result of American xenophobia—fear of strangers or foreigners. The interesting thing about this topic is that I don’t ever recall learning about this in grade school history classes. However, I did hear a little bit here and there from my mother growing up. I think now is a good time to investigate and examine what happened to Italian-Americans and if and when there will ever be talks about possible reparations; or is it just something to sweep under a rug and forget? To figure out how Italian-Americans can be compensated for their torture, we need to examine what happened in the past and learn from those events.

Anti-Italianism

What is anti-Italianism? According to Wikipedia.org “it is hostility toward Italian people and Italian culture. Furthermore, it uses stereotypes about Italian people, a
popular one being that most Italians are naturally violent, somehow associated with the Mafia”–an organized crime group from Sicily. A prime example of such stereotype took place back in 1992 when Bill Clinton during a phone conversation with one of his mistresses, Jennifer Flowers said that Mario Cuomo (the former governor of NY) was a “Mafioso.” This has a connotation that Bill Clinton assumes that just because someone’s name ends with a vowel and he or she happens to be Italian, and then they are all connected to the Mafia one way or another.

Amazingly, there wasn’t much of an uproar if any from the Italian-American community. If Bill Clinton would had said something derogatory about Blacks, Arabs, or Muslims, then he would had never had become president of the United States and that might have meant the end of his political career. We live in a society today that it is ok to bash white ethnic groups and not feel any resentment for doing so unlike other races or ethnicities, such as African Americans, Arabs, and Muslims. When you talk about anti-Italianism, you have to include discrimination, prejudice, and even violence.

**Anti-Italianism in the United States**

Nowadays, many families have access to cable TV or even the internet. HBO has been causing tons of controversy with their hit TV show, “The Sopranos” which involves an Italian-American family in Northern New Jersey that is involved with the Mafia. This has angered a number of Italians because they feel that the culture is always being associated with violence and crime thanks to Hollywood. One can even make the argument that Italians are laid back when it comes to these “stereotypes” and instead of ignoring them, they should be more concerned and proactive in making Americans in general not believe that the Mafia is a normal part of Italian-American life. Back in 1972
Francis Ford Coppola directed a Mafia themed movie that described organized crime in Sicily and in the United States called “The Godfather.” Even though few Italians feel offended by such shows, some believe that they become a problem when they feature the Mafia as a norm or accepted part of Italian American life.

Thanks to the media, Italians have been portrayed as violent, sociopathic, “knife-wielding” gangsters and street ruffians. This leads to common stereotyping such as considering Italians as working class thugs, to violent “guappo” immigrants, to Mafiosi.

According to University of Rome Professor Stefano Luconi who wrote the article titled:

*The Impact of Italy’s Twentieth-Century Wars on Italian Americans’ Ethnic Identity;*

> “As latecomers to the United States in terms of succession of immigrant waves from Europe, Italians shared a common experience of widespread discrimination and bigotry regardless of the variety of their regional and local extractions. They did not face restrictions as for naturalization, civil and political rights, as well as access to material resources that, conversely, were systematically denied to people of color. Yet, by Wasp criteria, they were usually regarded as an inferior people who fell easy prey to emotion, tended to resort to violence, were prone to crime, ignored even elementary health standards, and could not be assimilated within U.S. society” (Luconi, 470).

Now could this be said of all Italian-Americans at the time, or was it just an aberration to non-Italians? From personal experience when I was in grade school, I was nicknamed “the Italian Stallion” in high school and many times I was asked if I was in the Mafia. When I was a little kid I used to laugh it off, but when I got older, I started to get offended because people had the misconception that just because someone is Italian, then they are in the Mafia. As a result, I would find myself explaining to my schoolmates that the Mafia that they are referring to is traditionally from Sicily and I am from Rome,
that’s a huge difference. That does not mean that there cannot be a Roman Mafioso, it just means that it is highly unlikely.

In the 1700’s, John Calvin who was the French reformer known for helping to establish the Reformed Church of Switzerland, classified Italians as lazy, two-faced, and deceitful. Perhaps this was a result of John Calvin’s frustration with the Roman Catholic Church and due the fact that the Church’s headquarters has been in Rome for as long as one can remember, he may had been angry with Italians in general.

During Benito Mussolini’s Fascist regime, according to “The Impact of Italy’s Twentieth-Century Wars on Italian Americans’ Ethnic Identity;”

“Most Italian Americans were sincere as for their disavowal of Mussolini’s regime and their loyalty to the United States. They almost unanimously supported the war effort of the United States and about ten percent of them joined the U.S. armed forces within two months after the U.S. entry into World War II. As their previous identification with fascism had resulted primarily from ethnic pride and defensiveness within an anti-Italian environment, the war between their ancestral and adoptive countries turned attachment to the Duce’s government from an asset into a liability in terms of acceptance of Italian Americans on the part of the broader U.S. society” (Luconi, 481).

One can even go as far back as 1861 when both Italy and the United States were going through their own “civil wars” such as the unification of Italy and the American Civil War between the states. Amazingly, the idea that Italians served in the American Civil War is something that is never taught in public schools for some reason. According to Emanuele Cassani, author of Italiani nella Guerra civile Americana (Italians in the American Civil War):

“In early 1861, before the Union blockade closed the port of New Orleans, four ships arrived from Naples with 884 ex-members of the armed forces of the defunct kingdom of the Two Sicilies to take up arms for the Confederacy. The port of Naples was closed shortly thereafter to
any more Confederate recruiting efforts when the United States complained to the new Italian government. Interestingly, US diplomatic efforts never did succeed in completely closing Italian ports to Confederate naval vessels. The troops were enlisted as the “Italian Guards” in the 10th Louisiana infantry regiment. Some survived the war and some returned to Italy. To this day, in the museum at “Civitella del Tronto” in Abruzzo, the last Bourbon fortress in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to surrender on March 20, 1861 to the forces of Italian unification, there is a Confederate flag commemorating the soldiers who left to fight for another South” (Emanuele, 457).

Amazingly, despite all of these contributions by Italians to the United States of America, Congress passed the nationality-based quota in 1921 that limited the number of aliens such as Italians that were allowed to come to the United States annually. This was a perturbed time for Italians because there was tons of hatred geared at them by Americans which led to harsher days for them.

**Violence against Italians**

In the United States, Italians who immigrated here were vulnerable to extreme prejudice, racism, and more often than not, violence. Italian-Americans back then were considered non-white and were ranked second just behind the African-Americans in ethnic groups being lynched. According to David Smith, author of *Southern Historian*:

“In October 1890, David Hennessy, New Orleans police superintendent, was gunned down in the street. Long-standing prejudices contributed to the arrest of nine men of Italian descent for the crime. Following a trial in March of the following year, six of the accused were acquitted and the other three were the beneficiaries of a hung jury. The nine men were returned to custody to await trial on a second charge but were lynched by a nativist mob on March 14, 1891. Word of this crime immediately spread to the Italian diplomatic delegation and President Benjamin Harrison’s administration, and to Italy. The Italian government sought reparations for the murders of several of its citizens, but Secretary of State James G. Blaine replied noncommittally. Relations between the two nations became strained, with war talk on both sides of the ocean. At the end of March, Italy recalled its ambassador, stunning the United States. After a quiet summer, however, the war scare was to awaken the US government to the
Seliman

It is extremely disgusting when one examines what occurred in New Orleans that day in 1891 and finds out that people were killed for no particular reason, but for either the color of their skin or ethnicity. Were those that were incarcerated really criminals? How can Italian-Americans as a culture be compensated for the brutality and torture that they went through in the history of this country? To add fuel to the fire, let us examine one of the most infamous cases of ethnic injustice that the world has ever witnessed.

**Sacco and Vanzetti**

Nicola Sacco was born on April 22, 1891 in an Italian town called Torremaggiore. He arrived in the United States at the age of 17 (1908) where he soon found a job in a shoe factory in Stoughton, Massachusetts. Soon after, he got involved in left-wing politics and at an anarchist meeting he met his “death-mate” Bartolomeo Vanzetti who also was an Italian immigrant who worked as a fish peddler in Plymouth. These two men developed a friendship and together they attended the same political meetings on a regular basis.

Bartolomeo Vanzetti was born on June 11, 1888 in Villaffalletto, Italy. He immigrated to America at the age of 20 (1908) where he lived in Plymouth, Massachusetts. According to *The History of Sacco and Vanzetti* courtesy of [www.torremaggiore.com/saccoevanzetti/english.html](http://www.torremaggiore.com/saccoevanzetti/english.html):

“Vanzetti was shocked by the way working class immigrants were treated in America and became involved in left-wing politics.” Furthermore, “like many left-wing radicals, Sacco and Vanzetti were opposed to the First World War and they took part in protest meetings.”

Unfortunately for them, trouble was on the horizon:
“On April 15, the payroll of the Slater and Morrill Shoe Company in South Braintree, Massachusetts, was stolen and the paymaster and a guard were murdered. Acting on a hunch that the crime was the work of local anarchists, a veteran police officer, Michael Stewart, arrested two obscure radicals and charged them with robbery and murder. The arrest of the two—Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti—coming at a time of heightened political repression in the United States, attracted the attention of leftist sympathizers. When a Dedham, Massachusetts, jury declared the two men guilty of murder on July 14, 1921, anarchists and radicals in the United States and abroad moved into action. The trial, in their eyes, had been a mockery of justice: No money was found linking the two convicted men to the crime. There was no physical evidence against Vanzetti. Both men provided alibis, and scores of witnesses testified on their behalf. Prosecution witnesses made contradictory and weak statements. The court had seemed to attach as much significance to the defendants’ status as immigrants and their views as radicals as to their culpability” (McGirr, 1085-86).

As it is evident from the outcome of the trial that the two men were eventually executed, it can be concluded that the jury, the judge, and prosecution were extremely biased against Italian immigrants and for them being radicals. As a result of the outcome of this case:

“The Sacco and Vanzetti Case received a great deal of publicity. The case also resulted in anti-US demonstrations in several European countries and at one of these in Paris, a bomb exploded killing twenty people”
(www.torremaggiore.com/saccoevanzetti/english.html).

It was later revealed through a confession, that Sacco and Vanzetti were not involved with the crime and that it was a work of two other Italians, two Americans and a Portuguese immigrant. Unfortunately when this information was revealed, it was in 1925, two years before the wrongful execution of Sacco and Vanzetti.

It is worth noting that on August 23, 1977, (exactly 50 years after the execution) the then Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, issued a proclamation which
absolved the two men of the crime. According to Upton Sinclair, author of *Report to the Governor in the Matter of Sacco and Vanzetti:

“Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis asked the Office of the Governor’s Legal Counsel to report on “whether there are substantial grounds for believing at least in the light of the legal standards of today that Sacco and Vanzetti were unfairly convicted and executed” and to recommend appropriate action. The resulting “Report to the Governor in the Matter of Sacco and Vanzetti” detailed grounds for doubting that the trial was conducted fairly in the first instance and argued as well that such doubts were only reinforced by “later-discovered or later disclosed evidence.” The report questioned prejudicial cross-examination that the trial judge allowed, the judge’s hostility, the fragmentary nature of the evidence, and eyewitness testimony that came to light after the trial. It found the judge’s charge to the jury troubling for the way it emphasized the defendants’ behavior at the time of their arrest and highlighted certain physical evidence that was later called into question. The report also dismissed the argument that the trial had been subject to judicial review, noting that “the system for reviewing murder cases at the time…failed to provide the safeguards now present. Based on recommendations of the Office of Legal Counsel, Dukakis declared August 23, 1977, the 50th anniversary of their execution, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti Memorial Day. His proclamation, issued in English and Italian, stated that Sacco and Vanzetti had been unfairly tried and convicted and that “any disgrace should be forever removed from their names.” He did not pardon them, because that would imply that they were guilty. Neither did he assert their innocence” (Sinclair, 757).

At least an effort was made by an American governmental figure to correct a mistake made by the American judicial system even though it was 50 years too late. The Second World War also known as (WWII) was a source of anti-Italian activity.

**Italian-American Internment during World War II**

Just like the Jews, the Japanese, and Germans, Italians were a target of hate by the American people and its government during World War II. While Italy declared war on the United States as a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Italians living in
America and the majority of the Italian-American race were under suspicions by the Roosevelt Administration, of having a doubt on their loyalty.

According to www.italian-american.com: “Executive Order 9066, signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942 not only allowed the military to evict and intern Japanese-Americans but applied as well to German and Italian-Americans.”

Also according to the aforementioned source: “In February of 1942, some 10,000 Italic residents along the Pacific Coast were evicted by force from their homes that they had occupied for decades and issued identity passes that restricted their travel, employment, and ownership of such things as fishing boats and radios. In addition, Scores of fishing boats, the livelihood of thousands of Italic families, were impounded for naval use. Hundreds of community leaders, newspaper editors, social club officers, and teachers were summarily removed from their jobs and shipped to Montana for internment.”

To go even deeper, according to the Italian Historical Society of America:

“When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1936, he and all Italians living in the United States came under suspicion by the President and Congress of the United States. These concerns were greatly extended when, on May 22, 1939 Mussolini joined with Adolph Hitler and the Axis powers in what was called the “Pact of Friendship” but more commonly referred to as the “Pact of Steel.” Prior to Mussolini’s forays and foreign adventures, the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt admired Mussolini for his ability to organize the infrastructure of Italy-one of the objects of admiration was the creation of a social system as well as making sure that the trains ran on time. Roosevelt sent envoys to Italy and Mussolini’s son visited the United States being provided with great attention. Mussolini’s alliance with Hitler ended all of that. Many Italians although living and working in the United States had not yet been naturalized. When Italy became aligned with Hitler they immediately came under suspicion although there was not indication of any partisanship with their newly aligned homeland. Their loyalties nonetheless became a matter of concern. Roosevelt asked J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to assemble list of names of aliens from Germany, Japan, and Italy without regard for anything else but their nationality. In 1939 and 1940 prior to any participation of the United States in the European conflict, the Roosevelt administration and Congress passed and invoked legislation which significantly removed the rights of Americans of Italian extraction as well as alien Italians. On December 7, 1941, conditions became even more severe for Italians. The attack on the Japanese at Pearl Harbor elevated some 600,000 Italian Americans to be considered enemy aliens” (The Story of Italian American Internment during WWII, courtesy of www.italianhistorical.org).
It is amazing how a whole nation or government could have so much hate for another culture or group of people. These were all hard working people who were only minding their business and living their everyday lives when all of a sudden it was all taken away only because a war broke out which involved the militaries of Italy and the United States, but not the people of those two nations. All over the country, Italian resident aliens and Italian-American community leaders were questioned, given travel restrictions, and even interned.

This also meant that Italian language newspapers were limited and the Italian language itself was condemned as a result of government propaganda.

“People such as scientist Enrico Fermi and the parents of baseball star Joe DiMaggio were also subjected to restrictions. Although the worst of these injustices were ameliorated after six months, mainly for political reasons dealing with off-year elections, the shame and the economic consequences have never been addressed by the United States Government” (www.italian-american.com).

Speaking of injustice, the same website does mention the point about the injustices suffered in America:

“That the Italic people suffered any indignity at the hands of their own government, in a country they discovered, helped to create, and literally helped to build, is a serious miscarriage of justice. That they have been ignored, forgotten and belittled in this matter of Executive Order 9066 is a greater injustice and one without precedent in this era of political correctness.”

It is evident that even with such great people such as Christopher Columbus who discovered America and Amerigo Vespucci who was the Italian explorer that this country was named after, gave so much to what later became known as America or the United States of America. With all of this maltreatment of Italians in general, it is not fair from a
historical perspective that these people were belittled or even perhaps dehumanized as a result of their culture.

The one thing that distinguishes Italian-Americans from the Japanese Americans is that they never received any form of reparations, despite of the fact that President Bill Clinton admitted publicly that the US government misjudged the internment. Also, the Italians suffered through torture and persecution by the German soldiers after Italy switched over to the Allies in 1943. As a result of this “flip-flopping” Italian citizens were often massacred. If Bill Clinton really felt that way then why is it that he did not petition to the US government that they compensate those Italian-American families that went through a living hell just because they were Italian? Millions of honest hard-working Italian-Americans were pulled from their jobs, yanked from their homes, had everything taken from them for no reason other than pure xenophobia and hatred.

**Post-World War II Anti-Italianism**

Italians suffered greatly at the end of the Second World War. Once thriving Italian communities within African colonies such as Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya were reduced to only a few hundred people as a result of violent expulsion and persecution. According to [http://italian.about.com](http://italian.about.com):

“A bill in Congress, Wartime Violations of Italian American Civil Liberties Act (HR 2442) which has passed the House of Representatives, would require the U.S. Department of Justice to compile a report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans and would request a formal acknowledgement of these injustices by the presidents. Furthermore, the bill does not ask for an apology or compensation.”

That seems to be very interesting because, why on Earth would one not ask for at least an apology or for compensation after all of the torture and suffering that they went
through if he or she was an Italian-American? According to www.italian-american.com:

John Mancini who is the president of the Italics Studies Institute said:

“We’re a very tolerant people, it is bred into us that we don’t flout authority.” Furthermore, “Mancini’s institute is trying to bring the story to light, by getting funding for a PBS documentary.” He revealed that “no one seeks an investigation nor reparation, just $750,000 for a film that must be completed before those who lived through the era die off and to illuminate a dark period in our history, this is not too much to ask.”

**Contemporary Anti-Italianism**

There was controversy as recent as 2004 when a Democratic Italian American physician and politician, Daniel Mongiardo, ran against Republican Jim Bunning in the Kentucky Senatorial election. Jim Bunning caused a stir when he described Daniel Mongiardo: According to www.usatoday.com:

“Bunning once compared Mongiardo’s appearance to one of Saddam Hussein’s sons, and made an unsubstantiated claim that his wife wound up black and blue after an alleged encounter with his rival’s staffers at a political picnic” (www.usatoday.com).

Without any surprise, these tasteless comments were viewed as ethnic slurs.

Without a doubt, the most insulting of ethnic slurs came courtesy of Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Back in March 2008, during Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, he said in an article that “the Italians looked down their “garlic noses” at the Galileans.” This led to the Italian American Human Relations Foundation to call Wright’s antics “an example of hatred.” If we have this kind of prejudice in politics, we might as well have it in showbiz too. Here’s what conservatist/radio talk show host Curtis Sliwa had to say during one of his skits:

"Uh, the Italian-American Museum in Little Italy? What the hell is that? I mean, what do you need an Italian-American Museum in Little Italy for?"
And plus, why do we need to be spending federal tax dollars? You go to the Italian-American Museum, you make a contribution, or you have an enforcer there from the Genovese, Gambino, Lucchese, Colombo, Bonanno crime families who forces you to pay a contribution. I could swing a dead cat over his head and every fifth person I’d hit would be in organized crime” (www.therightperspective.org).

Interestingly enough, this guy is of Italian-Polish heritage and he is ripping his own people and assuming that all Italians are in the Mafia. If there is any consolation for Italian-Americans is that Sliwa did end up apologizing for his malicious racist commentary and even managed to get a tour of the Italian-American Museum. It’s interesting to note that the only form of recognition that Italian-Americans get, is during Italian-American Month which is in October every year topped off by Columbus Day. Ironically, this month is only celebrated here America and not the “mother land,” Italy.

It is appalling how schools here in the United States when they teach History, they never mention the suffering and the torture that the Italian-Americans went through at the hands of the American government and its military. It’s like one of those situations in which the culprit knows that he or she is guilty, is aware of the harm that they inflicted on their victims, but they just don’t want to hear about it, they just sweep it under a rug and keep it there. Perhaps it could be argued that education, whether someone realizes it or not, is a huge source of anti-Italianism because the way the curriculum is designed in public schools is that people only learn about and should only know about the great things that America has done, they are the “good guys” and everyone else is “evil.” There is no doubt in my mind that this mentality was one of the main catalysts which led to hatred for Jews, Italian-Americans, German-Americans, Native-Americans, and nowadays Arabs and Muslims and to a certain extent-the Mexicans. If you really think
about it, the Italian-Americans back then were what the Mexicans are now. Americans feared Italians because they were extremely hard working people focused on taking care of their families. Well, the American people and its government were worried that this work ethic would eventually lead to not just Italians, but foreigners in general to take all of their jobs. Incredibly, this still goes on today in America and the twist is that these “foreigners” are doing all of the jobs that White Americans don’t want to do. Even back during the early part of the 20th century when most if not all of the Italian-American men were working in sweat shops, shoe factories, construction, and some of them were even entrepreneurs. Oh, just in case you didn’t know, Bank of Italy was founded by an Italian named Amadeo Giannini in San Francisco, CA in 1904. He later renamed the company, Bank of America in 1928 as a result of the anti-Italian movement that was going and the merger of his bank with Bank of America Los Angeles.

The point is that Italians have done so much for this country ever since its discovery in 1492 by Christopher Columbus.

An Untold Secret of History?

Most-Italian Americans are not seeking reparations or anything like that, but according to sfgate.com: “Al Bronzini’s father lost his business and his mother lost her mind. Rose Scudero and her mother were exiled while Doris Giuliotti’s father ended up in an internment camp. Anita Perata’s husband was held in a detention center and her house ransacked by the FBI. They don’t want reparations, apologies, or pity, they simply want the history books rewritten to say that, almost 60 years ago, it was a crime to be Italian” (A Secret History-Patricia Yollin, 10/21/01). Again, going back to the argument that in school you only hear about the suffering and torture of the Native Americans,
Blacks, and Jews, but you never hear anything about what the Italians went through. How can this country be so naïve and always seem to omit even their own wrongdoings just to protect this country’s image? It can be said that America may be beautiful on the outside, but in the inside historically speaking, it’s like night and day. To further support this point, deputy executive officer in the civil rights division of the U.S. Justice Department, Joanne Chiedi pointed out: “What happened to the Italians was based on wartime hysteria. We’re trying to educate people so it won’t happen again; the story needs to be told” (courtesy of sfgate.com).

Back in November 2000, President Bill Clinton did sign the Wartime Violation of Italian American Civil Liberties Act. This meant that the government finally admitted to its wrongdoing. In Italian, it is called “Una Storia Segreta,” meaning secret story and/or secret history. What’s disturbing still to this day is that a lot of the information about the internment camps is still classified today and the whole spiel about what happened over 50 years ago still remains hidden thanks to the United States government.

In 1994 there was a new exhibit called “Una Storia Segreta” which was instrumental in organizing the Museo Italo Americano (The Italian-American Museum). According to the exhibit: “besides ordering the Justice Department probe, the civil liberties act says the President should acknowledge what happened, the government should open its files and federal agencies should pay for conferences, seminars, lectures and documentaries to brink the wartime saga out of the closet” (sgate.com). It is evident that even though Italian-Americans are not seeking any apology or reparation, they do want make people aware of what really happened to them or to their relatives in order to
bring forth an awareness that this saga really did happen and innocent people were hurt, killed, tortured, and etc.

**Wartime Effects in the Present**

I know many Italian-Americans that I see when I am either at school or at work. When I ask them if they speak Italian, they all seem to answer me the same way: “no, I wish I did, but my father and my grandfather used to speak it, but they never taught me.” This is appalling because Italian is one of the most beautiful languages in the world and there are thousands of Italian-Americans that don’t speak it. In a way, it is not their fault; back in 1942 there was a political propaganda poster in the United States that was a very familiar sight during that era, here’s what it said: “Don’t speak the enemy’s language,” and right below the writing one could see a drawing of Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Japanese Emperor Hirohito. “Speak American” One could also argue the point that one may be surrounded by people who speak English and the Italian language may struggle to make it past one or even two generations of family members if they are not exposed to the language at an early age.

A writer, artist, and Chef from Berkeley, Gian Banchero, fills us in on what the feelings were as Italians back then:

“A lot of people from my folks’ generation didn’t want to talk about being Italian, about having Italian blood.” My father used to say, Gian you’re so lucky, you can pass for Irish” (courtesy of sfgate.com).

This leads me to believe that this whole saga could possibly repeat itself in the future. It is going on right now with the Arabs, Muslims, and the Mexicans as they are subject to defamation.

**Conclusion**
Now that one has examined and investigated the suffering, torture, dehumanization, and malice that the Italians suffered in the United States for over the past 100 years, hopefully there will be greater awareness about what took place and that schools shouldn’t just teach about the Jews, Blacks, and the Japanese that were also tortured, but they should also teach about the Italian-Americans.

This should be the “Land of the Free” for everyone regardless of ethnicity, race, religious or political views. The best compensation for the Italian-American community is for people in general to stop associating crime, violence, hate, and laziness with Italians. Not all Italians are like that, in fact it is a culture full of love, hard-working and dedicated people who have been major protagonists in shaping the land we call “America.” So when if you watch HBO’s “The Sopranos” please do not think that all Italians are in the Mafia or are murderers and etc.

We can learn from the Sacco and Vanzetti case that when we have to make a big decision such as coming up with the verdict (which means truth in Latin), we should consider all of the evidence and the possibilities. These two men’s lives could have been spared if only the judge, the jury, and prosecution were impartial and not biased just because the two accused men in the courtroom were Italian.

The lynching of Italian people in New Orleans in 1891 was another example that 11 innocent people were falsely accused of killing someone and killed themselves only because of their ethnicity. The internment camps during World War II served as another wake-up call that even though America is the land of opportunity, it wasn’t to be for the Italian people until well after the War. This country really needs to raise the awareness of anti-Italianism and how it can prevent this terrible thing from ever happening again
and in order for this to happen, it is necessary to start with reshaping the educational curriculum in history classes and talk about all of the cultures that went through hell due to their skin color, religious beliefs, language, and etc. Let freedom ring for everyone regardless of what they look like or what they believe in. Italians were not the only oppressed ethnic group in America during that time period.

**America’s Melting Pot of Injustice**

*“Liberty and Justice for All, Except for Certain Immigrant Groups”*

Historically speaking, America has always been a place that caused immigrants from all over the world to leave their homeland and attempt to start a new life in the so-called “land of opportunity.” This same place has been the home of slavery, internment camps, racism, discrimination, lynchings, violence, and hate to name a few. In the previous section, anti-Italianism was examined and also discussed the brutal path that the Italians had to go through until they finally were accepted in American society. From there, it was learned that the government has always had a hand in enacting certain laws and regulations that benefit their mainstream society and not the minorities. Furthermore, one also learned that all the Italians want as far as reparations are concerned, is the idea of reparation through memory and admittance of guilt by the American government and its people.

In this section, one will examine and discuss the ordeals that other immigrant groups who came here went through and look at the situation with the Irish, Jewish, Germans, and the Japanese. At the end of each section it will be revealed if applicable if
these groups are seeking any form of reparation and what kind if any. This journey in history begins with the Irish.

**Irish-Americans**

Who is an Irish-American? An Irish-American is a United States citizen who traces their ancestry back to Ireland. According to the 2008 American Community Survey, “an estimated total of 36,278,332 Americans which is a little under 12%, reported some Irish ancestry.”

**Anti-Irish Sentiment**

A collection of hostile attitudes toward Irish people. According to http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~el6/presentations/Irish_Americans_S2_WS2003/Anti_Irish_Sentiment.html: “On arrival in America, the Irish people encountered new struggles. The American people had kept old prejudices alive and these included prejudices against the Irish.” One of the main reasons why certain ethnic groups despised the Irish was the fact that they refused to give up their Catholic faith. In addition, they were considered low-class people as they had to live in poor conditions and were also unable to find work.

The reason that they were unable to find employment was due to the fact that there was a popular phrase that said: “NO IRISH NEED APPLY” in employment ads which also included the sign “NO SALESemen, NO IRISH” which was found hanging on doors of private homes and businesses. Where did these signs come from? According to Richard Jensen, author of *No Irish Need Apply*:

*There probably were occasional handwritten signs in London homes in the 1820’s seeking non-Irish maids. The slogan became a cliché in Britain for hostility to the Irish. Tens of thousands of middle-class English migrated to America, and it is possible a few used the same sort of handwritten sign*
in the 1830-1850 period; the old British cliché was probably known in America. There is no evidence for any printed NINA signs in America or for their display at places of employment other than private homes (Jensen, 409).

Furthermore, the Irish were found living in the slums without plumbing and running water. Also according to the aforementioned source, “Their living conditions bred disease and ultimately death with an estimated 80% of infants born to Irish immigrants in New York City dying.” This is very sad because this could had all been prevented if the American government would had been more welcoming of the Irish people and perhaps all of these babies would not had died due to terrible living conditions.

The jobs that the Irish were allowed or restricted to were the ones that were too unsafe for black slaves to perform due to the fact that the loss of a slave was considered an out of pocket expense for the slave-owner. The Irish were also seen working in docks and other occupations that involved a great danger or risk of getting injured. The employment sector for the Irish was like a tale of two worlds: While the Irishmen worked outside on the docks, the Irishwomen were reduced to working at home domestically. The cradle of anti-Irish sentiment in the United States was Boston, Massachusetts. This was in large part due to the great number of Irish immigrants that made that their home. By the time 1855 rolled around, about one-third of the population of Boston consisted of Irish-born people. This caused a visitor to call Boston “the Dublin of America.”

In the 1840’s and 50’s the pinnacle of Boston’s anti-Irish sentiment came in the form of the Know Nothing party who opposed to foreign immigration. The main target
of this group was the Irish Catholics because the party felt that “Americans must rule America.” This came as a result of the biggest fear of Bostonians that they would be taken over by Irish immigrants and therefore they would also take over political powers. According to Oliver Rafferty, author of *Fenianism in North America in the 1860’s: The Problems for Church and State:*

“Irish and Catholic integration into North American society was complicated by the fact that various groups, such as the nativists and the know-nothing party in the United States and the Orange Order in Canada, were hostile to immigrants and explicitly anti-Catholic. In part, the anti-immigrant sentiments of these organizations arose in response to the enormous wave of immigration as a result of the Irish famine and the turmoil in revolutionary Europe in the late 1840s. The phenomenal growth of Catholicism in the new world clearly alarmed the settled Protestant ethos of much North American life. In 1850, there were 1,606,000 Catholics in the United States; by 1860 this had grown to 3,750,000 and by 1900 to more than 12,000,000. During this period some 5,000,000 arrived from abroad. Although by no means all Irish, the Irish none the less came to exercise a disproportionate influence on the affairs of the Catholic Church in the United States. The political activity of the Irish in the new world added to the difficulties of the Catholic Church which saw itself constrained by Protestant prejudices. Irish political considerations threatened to overshadow specifically Catholic concerns, over education for example, at the expense of the church’s progress in North America (Rafferty, 257-59).

Amazingly, San Francisco was the home of perhaps the biggest Irish opposition. There was a Vigilance Committee that assumed control of the government and their goal was to eradicate Irish Catholics from the city. Two of these Irish Catholics were lynched, which resulted in many others running away from the city. According to R.A. Burchell, author of *The San Francisco Irish, 1848-1880:*

“There is no suggestion that the committee did not have other goals, directed towards reforming and strengthening law and order in the city. Those whom it punished seem, by and large, to have deserved their fate, and there is no evidence that they would have met it had the committee not take its stand. Yet it is undeniable that the committee had
its political ends, which became more articulated in its latter days, though, unlike the outcome of the 1856 committee, these aims were not shared even by all members of its movement.

What amazes me about this is that the Irish immigrants from back then, were all white and yet here in the United States they were not considered white, they were considered black.

**Stereotypes**

The Irish were not spared from stereotyping, especially the Catholic ones. According to a historian named George Potter, “the media often stereotyped the Irish in America as being boss-controlled, violent (both among themselves and with those of other ethnic groups,) voting illegally, prone to alcoholism, and dependent on street gangs that were often violent or criminal” (www.bookrags.com).

According to Weekly magazine, “anti-Irish sentiment was also prevalent in the popular magazines of the time through cartoons. A cartoonist influential in the permeating of negative Irish stereotypes was Thomas Nast, who portrayed Irish immigrants as drunks, prone to violence, and possessing simian-like facial characteristics.” To go even further with Nast, according to Mark Bryant, author of *Publish and Be Damned*:

“A staunch republican and Protestant, Nast together with Harper’s Weekly, campaigned vociferously against William Mercy Tweed, the corrupt leader of boss of Tammany Hall, the political machine which ran New York City’s Democratic Party. A former New York State Senator, Tweed and his Irish Catholic associates had by January 1869 taken control of the city, and were looting millions of dollars of taxpayers’ money by ‘invoice padding’, bribes, kickbacks, intimidation, and other means. On September 23, 1871, Nast drew Boss Tweed and his three ‘Tammany Ring’ associates, New York Mayor Oakey Hall, Peter Sweeny and Richard Connolly—as a group of vultures on stormy mountain ledge squatting on a body marked ‘New York.’ They were shown picking over
bones with labels such as ‘Rent Payer,’ ‘Liberty,’ ‘Law,’ ‘Tax Payer’,
‘Justice,’ and ‘Suffrage’ and above their heads could be seen a lightning
bolt about to start a landslide that would sweep them away” (Bryant, 57).

These stereotypes prove that every immigrant group that came to the United
States at some point, almost always had to put up with stereotypes from mainstream
society.

**Irish Immigration in America in the 19th Century**

The Irish had it tough even while the boat that brought them here from Ireland
was docking. “These immigrants to America learned that life in here was going to be a
battle for survival. Hundreds of runners, usually large greedy men, swarmed aboard the
ship grabbing immigrants and their bags trying to force them to their favorite tenement
house and then exact an outrageous fee for their services” (www.kinsella.org).
Furthermore:

“As the poor immigrant had no means of moving on, they settled in the
port of arrival. Almshouses were filled with these Irish immigrants as they
begged on every street. One Irish writer during that time wrote that “our position
in America is one of shame and poverty.” No group was considered lower than
an Irishman in America during the 1850s” (www.kinsella.org).

To further support this claim about how the Irish were treated during that time
period, the Chicago Post wrote, “the Irish fill our prisons, our poor houses…Scratch a
convict or a pauper, and the chances are that you tickle the skin of an Irish Catholic
putting them on a boat and sending them home would end crime in this country”
(www.kinsella.org). In other words, the Irish were viewed as low class animals just like
the black slaves were.
The arrival of the Irish was a blessing for the United States because this was a time in history when the country was going through the Industrial Revolution. America was growing and in order to support this growth, it required men to do the dirty work of constructing bridges, canals, and railroads. It was very demanding work because it was also very dangerous, but it was desperation that took them to these jobs. On the other hand, the Irish women worked as well. They held such jobs as: chamber maids, cooks, and the caretakers of children. The common phrase of the time period was “let Negroes be servants, and if not Negroes, let Irishmen fill their place.” The odd thing was that both the Irish and the blacks hated each other as the blacks were the first group to coin the term “white nigger” referring to the Irish.

Finally, the days of “No Irish Need Apply” were history as St. Patrick’s Day replaced violent confrontations. According to www.kinsella.org, “The Irish not only won acceptance for their day, but persuaded everyone else to become Irish at least for St. Patrick’s Day.” Furthermore, “the appearance of large numbers of Jews, Slavs, and Italian immigrants led many Americans to consider the Irish an asset as their Americanization was now recognized.” This resulted in the Irish finally being accepted into American society as hostility turned its attention to new immigrant groups coming to America.

Reparations

As far as reparations are concerned, the majority of the people want some sort of monetary compensation and an apology, while some have suggested using St. Patrick’s Day as Irish reparations day. Another way to look at it would be when the Irish were finally accepted into American society and therefore it resulted in them to be able to gain
power and acceptance. It can be argued that the ultimate example of this is when John F. Kennedy became President of the United States and he wasn’t only Irish, but he was Catholic as well. This leads to the next group of immigrants, the Jews.

**Historical Look at Jews in the United States**

What many people do not know is that Jews have been in America as early as the Colonial era of the 16th century even though they were represented by a microscopic number in terms of population. According to *American Jewish History* by Gary Grassl, “the earliest recorded Jew living in what is today the United States of America was Joachim Gans, an Ashkenazi Jew from Prague, Kingdom of Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic)” (Grassl, 195). Furthermore, the majority of the earliest of Jewish communities were called Sephardic because they were Jewish immigrants of Spanish and Portuguese ancestry.

**Jews and the American Civil War**

We can say that a dislike towards Jews by non-Jews began as early as the American Civil War. This was a time when there was tension over race and immigration, and even economic competition between Jews and non-Jews which led to perhaps the worst outbreak of anti-Semitism up to that point in time. According to Gustavo Perednik, author of *History and Analysis of Anti-Semitism*; “Americans on both sides of the slavery issue denounced Jews as disloyal war profiteers, and accused them of driving Christians out of business and of aiding and abetting the enemy.” As a result of him being influenced by these sentiments, Major General Ulysses S. Grant enacted General Order No. 11 which expelled Jews from areas under his control located in Western Tennessee.
Grant’s statement regarding Order No. 11 was that “the Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled…within twenty-four from the receipt of this order” (Karp, the Library of Congress). The President of the United States at the time was Abraham Lincoln who rejected Grant’s order but by the time that took place, a number of towns had already enforced Order No. 11. Later on, Grant enhanced his order by demanding that no Jews are allowed to travel on the road southward. He was aided by Colonel John V. DuBois who also ordered that “all cotton speculators, Jews, and all vagabonds with no honest means of support, to leave the district. He also added that “the Israelites especially should be kept out…they are such an intolerable nuisance” (Karp).

**World War II and the Holocaust**

Despite of the Immigration Act of 1924, President Roosevelt refused to let Jewish passengers disembark into the United States off of SS St. Louis ship carrying over 900 passengers who had set sail from Hamburg, Germany in order to escape Hitler’s regime. President Roosevelt was threatened by the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull and from other Southern Democrats if he allowed the Jewish passengers to get off the ship, they would not support his re-election bid in for 1940.

The most appalling thing is that the United States’ tight immigration policies were not lifted during the Holocaust, which could had saved between 190,000-200,000 Jews during the Second World War had it not been for bureaucratic obstacles to immigration. The United States should be ashamed of itself for not having any consideration for human life and even though the Holocaust took place in Europe, all of these deaths could had been avoided if the U.S. would just let those poor Jewish people get off of that ship. In
addition, history could have been changed and many of those people may have still been alive today to recount their experiences.

In the Nuremberg trials, it was ruled that Germany was completely responsible for the war and for the systematic killing of 6 million Jews, but looking back now, I feel that the United States should also pay reparations for allowing about 200,000 Jews to die just because of their selfish immigration laws.

**Anti-Semitism in the U.S.**

In the first half of the 1900s, Jews were subject to discrimination by not being allowed to work certain jobs; they were barred from some social clubs and resort areas, given a limit on enrollment at colleges, and not allowed to buy certain types of property. The pinnacle of anti-Semitism in the United States was during the interwar era. For example: “the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, the anti-Semitic works of car maker, Henry Ford, and the radio speeches of Father Coughlin in the late 1930s indicated the strength of attacks on the Jewish community” (Ne’eman, 174). Even though anti-Semitism in America has hardly ever been transformed into physical violence against the Jews, there have been some noteworthy cases of violence. For example, the attack of Irish workers and police on the funeral procession of Rabbi Jacob Joseph in New York City in 1902, the lynching of Leo Frank in 1915, the murder of Alan Berg in 1984, and the Crown Heights riots of 1991.

**Stats and Facts**

The following are facts and figures from the “Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice:”

*Anti-Semitic acts of violence in the United States are increasing alarmingly, with 1,821 reported in 2004, the highest level in nine years and an*
increase of 17% over the number reported in 2003 (Anti-Defamation League, 2005).

The United States Congress has approved the Global Anti-Semitism Awareness/Review Act, which acknowledges a disturbing increase in anti-Semitism and establishes an office in the State Department to monitor and combat anti-Semitism worldwide (U.S. Department of State, 2004).

The 2005 survey of American Attitudes Towards Jews in America by the Anti-Defamation League found that 14% of Americans or nearly 35 million adults, hold views about Jews that are “unquestionably anti-Semitic” (Anti-Defamation League, 2005).

Even though that it seems that some Americans still have anti-Semitic thoughts, there are organizations that are trying to limit or eliminate such sentiments.

Reparations

As far as reparations are concerned, the Jews felt that powers of the Western nations owed them compensation for loyalty, their service, and the ultimate suffering thanks to Hitler during the WWII. Perhaps the Jews want political autonomy because they are known for nationalism. There is a Jewish Community House in Brooklyn, New York that receives monthly payments for Holocaust survivors. Each survivor receives $2,500 from the German government each month. After reviewing various sources about the way the Jews want to be compensated, the majority prefer a monetary payout and a formal apology about the ordeals that they had to go through. It is amazing that there is still debate on how or whether the Jews should be compensated to this date. Now this leads to the Germans.

Anti-German Sentiment in America

This is also known as Germanophobia which means hatred or fear of Germans, its people, and the German language. When the United States entered World War I or The Great War as it was originally called in 1917, “some German immigrants, and sometimes
even non-German immigrants who were perceived as German (Dutch, Scandinavian, Swiss) were looked upon with suspicion and attacked regarding their loyalty. Some German immigrants in the United States were even tried, convicted and imprisoned, on charges of sedition, merely for refusing to swear allegiance to the United States war effort” (Robbins, 1-2 New York Times).

That was not all, in Chicago for example, street names that were German had to be changed to English. Another example is the changing of the name of Berlin, Michigan to Marne, Michigan. This clearly showed that Americans were completely anti-German and wanted to get rid of any traces of the culture. Furthermore, schools that once taught German were told to stop teaching the language of the enemy and therefore German was banned in schools and pretty much even in the workplace and the rest of American society. According to John Murrin, author of *Liberty, Equality and Power: A History of the American People*: “in New Orleans, Berlin St. was renamed for General Pershing who was head of the American Expeditionary Force, sauerkraut came to be called “liberty cabbage,” German measles became “liberty measles,” hamburgers became “liberty sandwiches” and Dachshunds became “liberty pups” (Murrin, 784). This seems extremely ridiculous because even if one changes the name of something, the thing is still the same. For example, a few years ago, there was an anti-French sentiment here in the States because France refused to support the United States with the War in Iraq. As a result, people starting calling French Fries “freedom fries” and French toast “freedom toast.” Interestingly enough the theme during both time periods, was “liberty” and “freedom.”
A lot of families that had German sounding last names changed them to American ones in order to disguise their German heritage. The interesting part, the Germans just like the Irish, served in the United States military and while still being loyal to their motherland. While German books were being burned and neighbors were being spied on by vigilantes, the culmination of Anti-German tension took place on April 4, 1918. On that day a brutal lynching occurred of German immigrant Robert Prager who was a coal miner living in Collinsville, Illinois and he was accused of making “disloyal remarks.”

In 1917 when Woodrow Wilson finally decided to enter the war, it bought upon a huge outbreak of hysteria against anything and everything that was German. According to Carl Wittke, “this led to one of the most difficult and humiliating experiences suffered by an ethnic group in American history.” Furthermore, everything that was German was a complete target of anti-German hysteria, which consisted of a goal to get rid of everything that was German. To add insult to injury, “the United States established an internment camp at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia where more than six thousand German-Americans were interned. These individuals were U.S. residents but had not yet acquired U.S. citizenship and were classified as “enemy aliens” (phenomenologycenter.org). Most of the internees were musicians and artists who worked in the various art academies and symphony orchestras all over the country. One internee even drew comparisons with the United States internment camps and the actions of later totalitarian regimes.

Even community leaders were targets of Germanophobia.

“Those who led organizations such as the Alliance became the objects of systematic persecution directed against them and their families. Their places of employment were contacted, as well as those of family members, recommending the termination of their employment. With national leaders, threats were made against their lives. Attempted lynchings, slander, lies, and accusations were
common. *Children of German-American leaders were harassed in school or at work*” (phenomenologycenter.org).

It is amazing what the Germans even went through. To even think about the fact that their very own Nazi government in Germany was killing 6 million innocent Jews while these German-Americans were in the United States dealing with their persecution, is quite ironic in a sense. It is interesting to wonder what kind of reparations if any, are the German-Americans seeking today for those atrocious acts against their ancestors by the American government.

**Reparations**

So far the Germans have not received any form of compensation from the American government for its actions against the people of German descent. The Germans just like the Italians, just want the United States to acknowledge what they did was wrong and that they are sorry. Therefore, they are looking for reparations through memory. According to [www.jcs-group.com](http://www.jcs-group.com): “Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis) has promised to introduce a measure to officially recognize the injustice suffered during the war by German-Americans and other Europeans in this country.”

**Anti-Japanese Sentiment**

Even before the 20th century, an aura of Anti-Japanese sentiment existed in the United States. Around the latter part of the 19th century, immigrants from Asia were targets of racial prejudice. To add further insult to injury, laws were put in place that heavily discriminated against Asians, especially the Japanese.

These laws outlined that Asians could not attain American citizenship and were not given basic rights, like owning land. These laws had a negative effect for the freshly
arrived immigrants because most of them were farmers and as a result of these laws, they were forced to become migrant workers.

Perhaps one can say that the creation of the Asiatic Exclusion League was the beginning of the anti-Japanese movement in California. This intensified when Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. In addition, schools in California forced children of Japanese descent to attend segregated and separate schools based on race. Furthermore;

“The Japanese invasion of China in 1931 and the annexation of Manchuria were roundly criticized in the US. In addition, efforts by citizens outraged at Japanese atrocities, such as the Nanking Massacre, led to calls for American economic intervention to encourage Japan to leave China; these calls played a role in shaping American foreign policy. As more and more unfavorable reports of Japanese actions came to the attention of the American government, embargoes on oil and other supplies were placed on Japan, out of concern for the Chinese populace and for American interests in the Pacific” (Ferrell, 67 Journal of Modern History).

World War II

American hatred for the Japanese became even more intensified when Pearl Harbor was attacked without warning. As a result, the United States was forced to join the war and fight against not only Japan, but Germany and Italy as well. This also resulted in Americans calling folks of Japanese descent, “Japs” and “Nips.” To further illustrate this, Henry Luce, author of *How to Tell Japs from the Chinese* says that “following the attack, many “Jap hunting” licenses were circulated around the country. In addition, LIFE magazine published an article on how to tell a Japanese from a Chinese person by the shape of the nose and the stature of the body.”

Japanese Internment Camps
The United States as a whole felt that the Japanese people were subhuman or animals. During this time, the Japanese refused to surrender to the U.S. which may had been a key factor in which a little over 600 Japanese captives were spared in Allied POW camps by October 1944. Between 112,000 to 120,000 Japanese migrants and Japanese Americans who came from the West Coast were placed in internment camps disregarding their feelings for the US or Japan. They were held for the duration of the war in the inner US. The large Japanese population of Hawaii was not profoundly relocated in spite of their proximity to vital military areas.

Amazingly, a public opinion poll in 1944 concluded that 13% of Americans were in favor of the extermination of all Japanese.

According to www.historyonthenet.com:

“On February 19 1942 Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. Under the terms of the Order, some 120,000 people of Japanese descent living in the U.S. were removed from their homes and placed in internment camps. The U.S. justified their action by claiming that there was a danger of those of Japanese descent spying for the Japanese. However, more than two thirds of those interned were American citizens and half of them were children. None had ever shown disloyalty to the nation. In some cases family members were separated and put in different camps. During the entire war only ten people were convicted of spying for Japan and these were all Caucasian.”

It wasn’t until January 1945 that the internees were finally allowed to return home.

Reparations for the Japanese

The Japanese are one of only a few oppressed groups of people that have actually received some form of reparations or redress. The Colorado History Organization informs us of the following:
“During World War II, Colorado governor Ralph Lawrence Carr was the only elected official to publicly apologize for the internment of American Citizens. Even though the act cost him reelection, he gained the gratitude of the Japanese American community, such that a statue of him erected in Sakura Square in Denver’s Japantown.”

“Beginning in the 1960s, a younger generation of Japanese Americans who were inspired by the Civil Rights movement began what is known as the “Redress Movement,” an effort to obtain an official apology and reparations from the federal government for interning their parents and grandparents during the war, focusing not on documented property losses, but on the broader injustice of the internment.”

In 1976, President Gerald Ford admitted that the internment was wrong and it was a national blunder which will never be repeated again.

Furthermore, Geoffrey Stone, author of *Perilous Times* states that

“The campaign for redress was launched by Japanese Americans in 1978. The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) asked for three measures to be taken as redress: $25,000 to be awarded to each person who was detained, an apology from Congress acknowledging publicly that the U.S. government had been wrong, and the release of funds to set up an educational foundation for the children of Japanese American families” (Stone, 305). The ultimate positive result according to Leslie Hatamiya, who wrote *Righting a Wrong*, came “In 1988 when U.S. President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which had been sponsored by Representative Norman Mineta and Senator Alan K. Simpson—the two had met while Mineta was interned at a camp in Wyoming—which provided redress of $20,000 for each surviving detainee, totaling $1.2 billion dollars” (Hatamiya, 108-9).

Four years later: “On September 27, 1992, the Civil Liberties Act Amendments of 1992, appropriating an additional $400 million in order to ensure that all remaining internees received their $20,000 redress payments, was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush, who also issued another formal apology from the U.S. government” (Hatamiya, 108-9).

As one can see, the Japanese seem to be group that got the biggest compensation out of all of the oppressed groups in history. Perhaps only the Jews would rank anywhere close to what the Japanese got. It seems that the U.S. government wanted to quickly
rectify its mistakes with the Japanese because they started to see that Japan had the potential to be one of the most powerful economies in the world. So just like everything else, the U.S. wants to be where the money is. It’s amazing how a lot of American firms were sold to Japanese ones.

**Conclusion**

Despite of the fact that the Irish, Jews, Germans, and the Japanese were at some point victims of severe oppression, they eventually all climbed the ladder to acceptance by the United States’ government. It was through these ordeals that Americans were able to learn about immigrants and in turn immigrants were able to learn about Americans.

All of these ethnic groups came to America for its opportunities such as jobs, housing, freedom from religious persecution, and the idea of living the American dream. It is a real shame that countless lives were lost during this xenophobic hysteria that took place in the democratic republic of the United States of America. There is no question that all of this could have been prevented if the government was not so ignorant with their discriminating propaganda. The bottom line was that someone like a President Roosevelt and Wilson only cared about keeping their citizens happy to do whatever means necessary in order to win their support for re-election.

The Japanese were given reparations and some by the United States government, but the government failed to provide that same compensation for the Jews, Germans, and the Irish. The irony about that is that today out of those three ethnic groups, Japan is one of the biggest economic powers in the world. So, this is where this journey through history ends, hopefully history classes in public schools will teach these lessons to their
students and not hide America’s historical ugliness toward immigrants. It is time to build a more amicable future by embracing everyone’s differences.
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