

The reality of american dream research paper

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In the early 1900s, most of the labor unions within the American Federation of Labor did not like immigrant. Therefore, they worked towards discouraging immigration. This ensured that they implemented and adopted strict immigration policies and resolutions.

The rise in unemployment forced the US government to suspend immigration for about five years even though there were still certain exceptions.

Individuals immigrated to the US in search for a better life in the post independence period. Some were from Germany, France, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands. The influx of the large number of immigrants made the living condition hard for some immigrant as they struggled to make ends meet (Gabaccia, 7).

Between 1900 and 1920, the American Congress established system that allowed migrants from different ethnic groups to live in the United States. Some groups such as the Asian population were not included in this system. The government encouraged the immigration of the population whose labor and skills were required in the United States. In the mid 1920s, the government adopted border controls.

This was meant to scrutinize migration of individual from Canada and Mexico due to security concerns. Immigration dropped significantly between 1925 and 1945. Therefore, the US government allowed immigrants who were displaced after the WWII.

This was after the US revised its immigration policy. In 1952, the government enacted a bill that gave the populations from every ethnic group a chance to enter the US. In 1965, a relative need system was adopted to allow entrance

for family members for labor and political asylum reasons. As a result, illegal immigration was experienced. The government through the congress implemented legislation that allowed persons that facilitated illegal migration to be punished.

In 1990, the Congress voted against the limitation of entrance against certain groups based on ideologies, beliefs and associations. It was also concluded that lawful immigration was to increase by 40% every year. By 1996, the border security between the United States and Latin America was reinforced to deal with illegal immigration. Fences were added in boarder areas with heavy traffic, and severe punishments for aiding or harboring illegal migrants were put in place.

Sinclair Upton indicates how most of the immigrant faced difficult living conditions in his book, *The Jungle*. Life was not easy for most immigrants. Some employers offered low wages on very hazardous conditions. The housing in the urban was overcrowded with very unsanitary conditions, and some of the immigrants did not accept the conditions (Sinclair, 23). One Italian old said:

I came to America because I heard that the streets were paved with Gold. When I got here, I found out three things: first, the streets were not paved with gold; second, they were not paved at all; and third, I was expected to pave them (Parker, 15).

Although the streets were harsh, only a few gave up and returned home.

The memory of the migrant workers is best seen on the images dust bowl migrants in John Steinbeck's best selling books, *The Grapes Of Wrath*. The book is dominated by the immigrant labor status during the Great Depression era. Migrant workers travelled to the country way long before the beginning of the depression era and continued to do so after the depression.

In the late 1930s, there was a significant inflow of immigrant population in the US. The immigrants were looking for jobs in the US. The immigrants who worked in California were displaced by the dust ball migrants. Migrant workers were common along the west coast. For instance, those who came from Mexico were employed on the plantations. The Blacks from the southern states and some whites were employed in the coastal region of the Atlantic.

This was in the difficult Florida's Everglades winter months and the northern states during the summer. At the beginning of the 1920s, the great depression the working conditions for workers in the agricultural nations worsened the workers already difficult situations and even farmers were faced with very difficult times. Farmers experienced loss in good pricing for crops, increased taxes, and increased debts (Koven and Götzke, 57).

As a result, farmers were forced to make choices on how to limit costs and reduction on the cost of wages was one of such options they made. The result was that workers were not able to find well paying jobs and the conditions became extremely bad. Wages fell in every part of the nation including in the sugar beets of Colorado and California. Migrants in Texas

obtained wages of between \$275 and \$ 500 that was hundreds of dollars way much below what was offered initially.

They merely survived. Apart from the low wages, workers lived under bad living conditions as some farm workers were sheltered in shanties, shacks, chicken coops, barns, and portable wagons. In fact, some even lived in the open fields such as the workers living in the undesignated camps. They got separated from the communities and were considered as outcasts. The racial immigrants were not accepted by the local communities and thus were discriminated (Koven and Götzke, 61).

The governmental legislation and programs did not recognize immigrant workers. For this reason, they struggled to find deals that could address their financial and socioeconomic needs.

A historian called Cindy Hahamovitch stated that the workers were considered as stateless (Hahamovitch, 23). They were treated differently from the workers that joined organized unions to bargain as a union. They were also not recognized by the 1935 National Industrial Labor Act that covered the agricultural workers. Later on in 1938, the Congress passed a Fair Labor Standards Act that regulated the workers' wages.

This legislation exempted the agricultural workers. The rural Americans used different ideologies that prevented them from benefiting from legislation that could protect them. Even the legislations that were passed later to address the problems of the rural America failed to protect the migrant workers. Even

the Agricultural Adjustment Act worsened their situations as many immigrants lost their jobs when the crop yield plunged (Gabaccia, 39).

The use of the machinery by farmers also contributed to job losses for the immigrants as less manual labor was required. The establishment of the resettlement administration may have been the only way that benefited them.

It was later called farm security administration that ensured that workers were housed. School, laundry, health and adult education initiatives were established. The resettlement must have released the immigrant workers, but they were still facing a battle of racism from both private and public agencies.

These agencies maintained a low and vulnerable workforce. The Mexican and the Mexican American were most affected especially during the great depression as most of them got banned from public projects. They were blamed for the depression that resulted in most of them being deported back to Mexico. This was facilitated by the relief charities and the municipal movements (Gabaccia, 47).

Even with exclusion from the national relations labor act thousands of the migrant workers joined unions and participated in strikes for better wages and improved living conditions. The number of unions and strikes increased. Stuart Jamieson said that, in 1932, he witnessed ten strikes involving about 3200 workers.

He went on and mentioned that the following year over 56, 000 workers in 17 different states participated in at least sixty one strikes. Several unions represented the agriculture workers by 1935. The Midwest and the east experienced many strikes than other parts of the US like California. Although immigrant workers were discriminated and considered as outcasts and discriminated, they were always motivated to make new deals and push forces to better their own situations (Blegen and Commager, 32).

Still, there are immigrants workers in the United States than the number in the early 1900. The working condition of legal immigrants has improved with time. The United States is one of the most targeted destinations for immigrants from any part of the world more than any other country in the world.

The early immigrants used the unions to fight for their rights. Today, legal migrants are protected by the law just as the United States citizens.

Therefore, the working conditions are quite favorable. Therefore, the nation is attracting immigrants from the neighboring countries especially from Mexico. Thus, the country has the capacity to monitor its borders to control cross border movement and ensure the general security of the country.

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