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Sommario/riassunto	Robber Barons and Wretched Refuse explores the connection between the so-called robber barons who led American big businesses during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era and the immigrants who comprised many of their workforces. As Robert F. Zeidel argues, attribution of

industrial-era class conflict to an "alien" presence supplements nativism—a sociocultural negativity towards foreign-born residents—as a reason for Americans' dislike and distrust of immigrants. And in the era of American industrialization, employers both relied on immigrants to meet their growing labor needs and blamed them for the frequently violent workplace contention of the time. Through a sweeping narrative of the time, Zeidel uncovers the connection of immigrants to radical "isms" that gave rise to widespread notions of alien subversives whose presence threatened America's domestic tranquility and the well-being of its residents. Employers, rather than looking at their own practices for causes of workplace conflict, wontedly attributed strikes and other unrest to aliens who either spread pernicious "foreign" doctrines or fell victim to their siren messages. These characterizations transcended nationality or ethnic group, applying at different times to all foreign-born workers. Zeidel concludes that, ironically, stigmatizing immigrants as subversives contributed to the passage of the Quota Acts, which effectively stemmed the flow of wanted foreign workers. Post-war employers argued for preserving America's traditional open door, but the negativity which they had assigned to foreign workers contributed to its closing.
