

War is the health of the state

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“... as the nations of Europe went to war in 1914, the governments flourished, patriotism bloomed, class struggle was stilled, and young men died in frightful numbers on the battlefields-often for a hundred yards of land, a line of trenches. ”- Howard Zinn By the middle of the 20th Century’s second decade, the European powers were at war. The conflict of World War I was encompassed the crisis of the colonial powers battle for resources and territory. Though nominally started due to political tensions between Europe, the crux of the battle was over land, territory and influence in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Zinn, 354, 1995).

The U. S remained on the sideline for the war’s beginning in 1914, but by 1917 after the sinking of the British passenger ship Lusitania, the nation had its pretense to enter into the battle. The lack of volunteers for combat caused President Woodrow Wilson to call for a general draft, leading to protests in many major cities. The Espionage Act of 1917 was also made law, which made it a crime to encourage or support interference with the enlistment process of the armed forces.

This particular act had long reaching consequences as it has been enforced during all the conflicts since World War I and had profound implications for the draft resistance during the Vietnam War. (Zinn, p. 357-359, 1995). Many opponents of the first World War were imprisoned for speaking out against the draft. The period also saw the suppression of the Anarchist movement, symbolized by the notorious prosecution of two anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in 1920 (Zinn 367, 1995).