

OPPOSITION TO WWI AT HOME

1. Americans have divided loyalties
 - a. Germans and Irish support the Central Powers
 - b. Prejudice against Germans in America became widespread
 - i. Liberty Cakes = Hamburgers
 - ii. German Americans were encouraged to Americanize
2. Three groups were established in the run up to war
 - a. Isolationist
 - b. Interventionist
 - c. Internationalist
3. Soldiers resisted the draft
 - a. Roughly 12% of men who received draft notices never responded to them
 - b. Conscientious Objectors were treated badly by their draft boards and humiliated in training camps
4. 1917 Espionage Act Passed
 - a. Banned treasonable or seditious media
 - b. Severe penalties for obstructing army recruiters
5. 1918 Sedition Act
 - a. Banned "Disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language

The **Espionage Act of 1917** was a United States federal law passed shortly after entering World War I, on June 15, 1917, which made it a crime for a person:

To convey information with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the armed forces of the United States or to promote the success of its enemies

To willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States.

Thus, while "espionage" is usually defined as a clandestine activity of getting secret information and passing it on to the enemy, the law vastly extended the meaning of the term to include also the openly

carried expressing of political opinions, without revealing any secret, and by persons who had no connection with the enemy - as long as the expressing of such opinions was construed as helping the enemy.

The legislation was passed at the urging of President Woodrow Wilson, who feared any widespread dissent in time of war, thinking that it constituted a real threat to an American victory.

A year after the Act's passage, Eugene V. Debs, Socialist Party presidential candidate in 1904, 1908, and 1912 was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison for making a speech that "obstructed recruiting". He ran for president again in 1920 from prison. He was pardoned by President Warren G. Harding after serving nearly 3 years.

The **Sedition Act of 1918** (May 16, 1918) was an amendment to the Espionage Act of 1917 passed at the urging of President Woodrow Wilson, who was concerned that dissent, in time of war, was a significant threat to morale. The passing of this act forbade Americans to use "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language" about the United States government, flag, or armed forces during war.