

Draft Boards

One of the most powerful forces in the system of conscription slavery in this country is also one of the most secret and least known: your friendly local draft board. Until very recently, the membership of each local board was shrouded in total secrecy. Even now, when official policy is at last to make the names public, it is virtually impossible to rout out the names from the Selective Service bureaucracy, and to answer such vital questions as: How are the draft boards selected? Who selects them? And on what criteria? Millions of kids have been drafted over the years, without having the slightest idea of *who* these draft board members, with virtual power of life and death over them, really are.

All this goes starkly against the official theory that draft board members are chosen among the local communities, among people who will know the special circumstances of the kids being drafted, and who could therefore act in accordance with their unique knowledge. The Selective Service literature itself says:

The decentralized organization of the Selective Service System is ... designed as a convenience to all registrants, providing them with ready access to a personalized unit of the System. ... The unpaid board members are often the neighbors of the registrants. The decisions are based on a

knowledge of local conditions and the circumstances surrounding each individual.

It all sounds very cozy; yet, in those cases that have been ferreted out by enterprising newsmen, it is the reverse of the truth. After a lengthy runaround, two "underground" New Left papers, the New York *Free Press* and the *Mid-Peninsula Observer* in California, have been able to get hold of and publicize the names of the draft board members in their areas. Almost uniformly, they found (1) that the draft board members did *not* live in the communities over which they rule; and (2) that low-income minority group youngsters were being drafted by high-income whites who lived far from their communities. Thus, in Manhattan over 88 percent of draft board members do *not* live in the communities they rule over; the chairman of the draft board for central Harlem, which drafts low-income Negro youths, lives in the wealthy white community of Great Neck, many miles away from Manhattan, on Long Island.

Little is known so far about these draft board members, although it is already clear that there is a high percentage of lawyers with political connections, and of local school district officials; in short, so-called grass roots people who are, in reality, tied in with the governmental apparatus. It also seems that vacancies in the boards are, in effect, filled by the remaining members themselves, thus making them a self-perpetuating little oligarchy.

One thing is strikingly clear: The draft board members are the willing mainstay of the entire Selective Service System; they not only lend their sanction to evil and to slavery, they are the chief operating arm of that enslavement. They have much blood to answer for. No wonder they want to operate in strict secrecy and anonymity! In its mendacious literature, the Selective Service System claims that "draft board members are frequently consulted (by potential draftees) at their homes or place of business." Let us hope that this pious hope will soon be a reality, and that these members will indeed begin to be consulted by their "clientele."