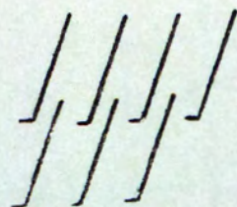




SELECTIVE



SERVICE

SYSTEM

OR,

THE

MANPOWER

CHANNELERS

Peter Henig

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--PREAMBLE  
SSOC Constitution

## SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

### Or, the Manpower Channelers

by Peter Henig, Ann Arbor REP

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from the Selective Service Orientation Kit available from SSS National Headquarters.

In the past twenty-seven years of war or preparation for war the American people have become accustomed to a variety of government measures which identify and regulate the use of commodities for which there exist competing claims in the national economy. For example, under Title I of the Defense Production Act of 1950, the President of the United States is authorized to establish a set of priorities for programs that are vital to the national defense and to allocate materials and facilities to insure that the priorities are realized. The body of regulations, orders, and procedures by which this is done comprise the Defense Materials System (DMS), administered by the Business and Defense Services Administration of the Department of Commerce in cooperation with the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the business community at large. The purpose of DMS, as described by the Department of Defense, is to :

(1) provide a "means of directing the flow of materials and products to the production, construction, and research and development requirements of the nation's defense programs. DMS helps to insure that these defense programs are maintained on schedule by providing a priority for the purchase of materials by defense contractors, sub-contractors and their suppliers;"

(2) permit "The maintenance of an administrative means of promptly mobilizing the industrial resources of the country in a limited or general war." (A.A. Bertsch, "The Defense Materials System and Priorities," Defense Industry Bulletin, Dept. of Defense, November, 1966).

In other words DMS is a way of dividing finite material resources among the industrial sectors represented by the military, military support, and the non-military sectors considered to be important. The system is designed so that mandatory regulation can be tightened or relaxed to accommodate different readings of what is in "the national interest" at any given time. When a strong directive touch is deemed essential, the system can be extended until it resembles the Controlled Materials Plan (CMP) of World War II. CMP designated specific materials to contractors and suppliers through their government clients which were, for this purpose, designated "claimant agencies."

Perhaps because it is contrary to human nature to think of ourselves

as raw materials, critics of the Selective Service System have overlooked the salient feature of SSS, -- which supervises the procurement of soldiers for labor in the military sector of the economy -- like DMS in the field of raw materials, it is the job of the SSS to mold and allocate the nation's finite "manpower resources" among the warfare, warfare-support, and non-warfare sectors of our economic life in conformity with priorities established through the cooperative efforts of government and business. Like DMS, the SSS is designed so that the degree of regulation of the "manpower flow" can be varied according to need. An excellent description of the ultimate regulatory capabilities designed into SSS is provided by the System itself:

"The System must be ready to effect the registration of all persons now or hereafter required by the Congress to be registered. It must collect and maintain such individual records as will enable the System to identify, find, classify, select, and deliver or make available persons of any class, type, skill, aptitude, profession, degree of physical fitness, or other category, registered or unregistered, for service in the Armed Forces or for any other type of service for which there is a need in the national interest. For the military, procurement will be direct by the process of selection and induction into the Armed Forces. For non-military use, the method will be by the indirect process of deferment as is now or later may be authorized by law; or by designation of the individual to the claimant user."

The Selective Service System points out at every opportunity that the procurement of soldiers is only one aspect of its overall task:

"Delivery of manpower for induction," it declares, "the process of providing a few thousand men with transportation to a reception center, is not much of an administrative or financial challenge. It is in dealing with the other millions of registrants that the System is heavily occupied, developing more effective human beings in the national interest."

According to its Oct. 3, 1966 Report of Availability and Summary of Classification, SSS was keeping track of a little over 33 million living registrants. Of these, about two million had been motivated to enlist and are serving in the armed forces. About 5000 thousand are serving after having been inducted. Approximately 4 and one half million are over the age of liability for military service. The remaining 16 million are currently feeling the effects of the classification and deferment system that is at the heart of the mechanism for controlling manpower. This article will try to show how the Selective Service System uses the threat of conscripted labor in the military sector of the economy to direct the behaviour and vocational choices of the great majority in the non-military sectors of the economy.

The job of Selective Service is best described, not as the selection of who will go, but rather as the delivery of a quota of previously screened males to the Department of Defense which, in turn,

determines their acceptability for induction. A man is issued his induction order only after he has passed the double-filtering process of SSS and the Department of Defense (DOD).

### THE MYSTERIOUS MECHANICS

The criteria for "acceptability" by the DOD are narrow; Are you healthy? Are you trainable? Are you likely to become an administrative problem? Answers to these questions are sought at the time of the pre-induction physical examination -- that is, the inspection by the military of Selective Service's suggested candidates for induction. If you conform to prevailing minimum physical, mental, and "moral" standards as measured by DOD procedures you will be ordered into the Armed Services.

The criteria used by the Selective Service System in deciding who should be offered to the military for inspection and possible removal from the competing civilian sectors of the economy are much more complex. They reflected the SSS's legal responsibility to procure military manpower with minimum consequences for the economic life of the nation. In other words, it should pick as its offering to the DOD those individuals in whose absence the nation can pursue its domestic "business as usual."

For a super-technological society which proposes to fight or be prepared to fight big and small wars for the foreseeable future, this manpower inventory and control takes on tremendous importance.

This is how the control system works. Each registrant is placed in one of 18 classes and sub-classes through a classification action of his local selective service board. The outcome of the classification action depends on the board's decision as to whether the individual is currently pursuing a civilian activity which is sufficiently in accord with the "National Interest" to warrant placing him in a non-inductible category. Those individuals who are of age but who are not acting in the "National Interest" in their civilian capacities are assigned to inductible categories. Registrants so classified comprise the local board's monthly "availability statistic."

At the state Selective Service headquarters the "availability" total for the state is formulated as a composite of local board reports. It is these reports of availability that the National Headquarters of Selective Service uses when dividing the burden of the manpower "call" -- issued by the DOD -- among the states. State headquarters then takes its share of the national "quota" and breaks it down into sub-quotas for local boards -- again on the basis of the availability statistic.

For example, if total availables for the State of Michigan were ten percent of the availables in the nation as a whole, then (with minor adjustments for enlistments and the "rejection rate experience" with the military) the draft quota for Michigan Selective Service Boards will be ten percent of the overall national manpower "call."

If the state quota is 1000 and the Ann Arbor Local Board reported 10% of the state's total supply of availables, then its quota would be ten percent of 1000, or 100.

ON YOUR TOES, BOY

It must be remembered, however, that a registrant only becomes part of the availability statistic if he is classified as inductible. If his board considers him to be serving the national interest by virtue of his occupation in civilian life, it will not want to take any chance on his being removed from the civilian sector and will classify him accordingly. Thus, if every draft-age registrant with the Ann Arbor Board happened to be a jig and template maker earning a living by training more jig and template makers in a technical institute, the board could very easily come up with an availability statistic of zero. Being a jig and template maker teaching the skill at a technical institute is a guarantee of being placed in one of the sub-categories of Class II -- occupational deferment.

Similarly, a board whose registrants all meet the going standards for full-time college student would have no registrants "available" -- regardless of the total number of registrants -- because college students are defined by statute as being in the "National Interest." On the other hand, if the jurisdiction of the board covers an area in which registrants are not students and do not possess skills which are deemed essential in the civilian sectors of the economy, the local board will be able to report a large number of availables and will be assigned a large delivery quota.

Under the present system, registrants who behave in the desired manner in civilian life are omitted from consideration for soldierhood.

It must be understood, however, that a key feature of the present Selective Service System is that nobody is exempt. Registrants are merely deferred. The status of the registrant is reviewed periodically and if his activities do not continue to justify deferment he is made "available" for induction. For SSS, this provides the answer to the "ever-increasing problem of how to control effectively the service of individuals who are not in the armed services." The System identifies this method of positive control by the term "channeling" -- the dynamics of which it describes as follows:

"Educators, scientists, engineers, and their professional organizations, during the last ten years particularly, have been convincing the American public that for the mentally qualified man there is a special order of patriotism other than service in uniform -- that for the man having the capacity, dedicated service as a civilian in such fields as engineering, the sciences, and teaching constitute the ultimate in their expression of patriotism. A large segment of the

American public has been convinced that this is true.

"It is in this atmosphere that the young man who registers at age 18 and pressure begins to force his choice. He does not have the inhibitions that a philosophy of universal service in uniform would engender. The door is open for him as a student to qualify if capable in a skill badly needed by his nation. He has many choices and is prodded to make a decision.

"The psychological effect of this circumstantial climate depends upon the individual, his sense of good sportsmanship, his love of country and its way of life. He can obtain a sense of well-being and satisfaction that he is doing as a civilian what will help his country most. This process encourages him to put forth his best effort and removes to some degree the stigma that has been attached to being out of uniform.

"In the less patriotic and more selfish individual it engenders a sense of fear, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction which motivates him, nevertheless, in the same direction. He complains of the uncertainty which he must endure; he would like to be able to do as he pleases; he would appreciate a certain future with no prospect of military service or civilian contribution, but he complies with the needs of the national health, safety, or interest -- or is denied deferment.

"Throughout his career as a student, the pressure -- the threat of loss of deferment -- continues. It continues with equal intensity after graduation. His local board requires periodic reports to find out what he is up to. He is impelled to pursue his skill rather than embark upon some less important enterprise and is encouraged to apply his skill in an essential activity in the national interest. The loss of deferred status is the consequence for the individual who acquired the skill and either does not use it or uses it in a non-essential activity.

"The psychology of granting wide choice under pressure to take action is the American or indirect way of achieving what is done by direction in foreign countries where choice is not permitted."

The standards against which registrants striving to retain their draft-deferred status are measured are the Department of Commerce List of Currently Essential Activities and the U.S. Dept. of Labor List of Currently Critical Occupations. The former activities are supposed to be "(1) necessary to the defense program, a basic health, safety, or interest, and (2) inadequate to meet defense and civilian requirements because of manpower shortage or for which the future manpower supply is not reasonably assured."

An occupation is listed as currently critical when "(1) under the foreseeable mobilization program an overall shortage of workers in the occupation exists or is developing which will significantly

interfere with effective functioning of essential industries and activities, (2) a minimum accelerated training time of two years (or the equivalent in work experience) is necessary to the satisfactory performance of all the major tasks found in the occupation, and (3) the occupation is indispensable to the functioning of the industries or activities in which it occurs."

#### THE MATRIX OF POWER

Announcement of currently critical activities and occupations is the job of an obscured group called the Interagency Advisory Committee on Essential Activities and Critical Occupations, Bureau of Employment Security, of the Dept. of Labor. The judgements, which are reached in conjunction with business and Defense Department manpower experts, are made known in booklets that are revised every few years and in an endless stream of memorandums, press releases, and informal advice that issues from the Department of Labor. Selective Service follows the guidelines faithfully, passing them down the line to the local boards which perform the classification actions. In addition, the SSS does a bit of manpower research of its own to further ensure that its choices are satisfactory to all interested powers. The SSS engages in "arduous study entailing continuous liaison and cooperation with civilian manpower users, with other government agencies concerned with utilization of civilian manpower and the Department of Defense, surveys of conditions in local areas -- as well as in the country as a whole ..."

One of the most important refinements in manpower channeling is a program called the Employer's Inventory of Critical Manpower. It is an intriguing collaboration between the Selective Service System and two quasi-official agencies -- the Engineering Manpower Commission and the Scientific Manpower Commission. The program, which is obviously tailored to the needs of large corporations, provides regular procedures and channels of communication by which large, private "manpower users" can apprise themselves of the latest developments in Selective Service "channeling" policies and in the critical occupations and essential activities guidelines.

The Employer's Inventory makes it possible for the large firm to predict and take measures to minimize the disruption which it might experience upon withdrawal for military service of different combinations of its skilled manpower. Two of the manpower questions the Employer's Inventory program is supposed to help answer are quite evocative: "How much consideration should be given to possibility of transfer of critical employees from a non-essential activity in the event of a national emergency?" "Are there enough men in the less vulnerable categories to fill in for possible loss of those in highly vulnerable categories?" (Employer's Inventory of Critical Manpower)

The implication of these two questions would seem to be that by rela-



tively minor manipulations of its manpower audit, a corporation can preserve a sizeable proportion of its skilled help from the draft.

Although it is not explicitly stated, the Employer's Manpower Inventory performs still another function. Through its provisions for employers to report their own analyses of the impact of manpower losses on their own operations (the Program's materials contain an explanatory letter from General Hershey and the address of every state Selective Service Headquarters) the program obviously provides the SSS with the data it needs to formulate pro-business policies for local boards.

The Selective Service System makes much of its apparently decentralized decision-making structure. Local boards, composed of your "neighbors" and mine are the ones who pass judgement upon us. A real grass-roots, democratic, people's operation.

A number of responses can be made to this. In the first place, the system uses its decentralized organization chart to evade accountability for its actions on all levels. Ask General Hershey. He'll tell you to go to the State Director. Ask your local board. The clerk will tell you to see the State Director. The State Director will tell you to see General Hershey. Ad infinitum.

#### LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE

The members of your local board do not have to be your neighbors at all. They must merely reside in the same county in which the board has its jurisdiction. If you live in a black ghetto, the "friends and neighbors" who offer you to the pacification industry can be all white, the owner of a plant, a plant production manager, the owner of an insurance agency, an accountant, and the owner of a grocery store. That's the way it is with Local Board 323, Royal Oak, Michigan.

One spokesman for the Selective Service System National Headquarters has even rhetorically asked whether "anyone would want to see a truck driver on a draft board." Indeed, the process of selection of draft board members-nomination by the state Governor and automatic appointment by the President-guarantees that boards will be controlled by, if not composed of, members of the local power structure.

In this set of circumstances, the beauty of SSS decentralization is that it permits local businessmen to adapt the nationally formulated pro-business manpower guidelines to their local needs.

In times of normal cold war when the demand for soldiers is stable and there is considerable slack in the economy, there are far more men in the "available" pool than the armed forces can actually use. In order to simplify the problem of selecting those who will actually be called for inspection and induction, boards generally are very liberal in granting deferments. And since they do not have to

follow guidelines very closely, subjective feelings of board members play a large part in the decision. In time of manpower stress, however, local boards are much more likely to follow the national classification guidelines closely. Then the "national interest" criteria are applied with greater uniformity and "fairness." Under such circumstances it is not the administration of the classification and deferment system that should be attacked, but the manpower channeling system as a whole. To be sure, the Selective Service is only one of many federal programs aimed at shaping human beings in the interest of the nation's corporate elite. But because it attempts to control all males during the time that they are making crucial life choices, and because it possesses draconic powers of enforcement, it is the most important and effective.

#### CANNON FODDER

As a system that coerces men into submitting to inventory and classification in categories which have been developed by a closed elite, the Selective Service System has a continual legitimacy problem. As the war in Vietnam has made it the focus of public attention in the past few years, the government has tried to obscure SSS's undemocratic character by charging it with responsibility for social uplift. The most ambitious program to date has been the one to draft and then "salvage" registrants who had been classified "Y" (not available except in time of war or national emergency).

1Y is an administrative category which is used to contain those candidates for induction who make low scores on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test which everyone takes at the preinduction physical examination. The DOD can, at will, revise the minimum acceptable score upward or downward. Last summer, Mr. McNamara did the latter. He announced that 40,000 economically "disadvantaged" youths who had performed poorly on the AFQT would now be given a chance to join the army. They would be inducted, trained up to standard, taught useful skills, and eventually returned to the civilian sector after having been imparted skills and attitudes that would make them useful to industry.

This course of action was attractive to the manpower planners for several reasons. In the first place, it made the most of the chance to make SSS prominent in the War on Poverty -- a crusade which doesn't seem to mind using the Vietnam cure for deprivation. The move was somewhat effective in silencing critics of the Selective Service System.

Secondly, it established the precedent for draining the 1Y pool before going after those who are likely to be more articulate and politically powerful -- students, and those with other types of occupational deferment. The "Y" pool is especially useful because it

contains nearly twice as many registrants as the IA pool of "avail-ables."

Finally, the economically "disadvantaged" who predominate in IV are, by definition, the least likely to be missed in the civilian sector of the economy. And those who come back will, of course, have been trained at public expense.

There are other indications that the Selective Service System will be used more aggressively as an instrument of domestic social control. The procedure in effect since July, 1964, of early inspection of all registrants and the referral of those with "problems" to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and to state agencies is only the beginning.

Describing itself as "the largest manpower inventory in the country" and "the most readily available facility for securing and evaluating occupational information," SSS now declares that:

"There is an immediate and pressing need to determine the acceptability of the individual to serve the nation in any capacity. In addition to physical characteristics, individuals possess certain other traits which thus far have not been measured. The examination of individuals has been made on a piece-meal approach with separate specialists ruling on the defects of the individual by segments rather than by an overall evaluation of the individual as a functional human being. With the privilege they have of seeing all young men, the Armed Forces can ill afford to disclaim an obligation or lose an opportunity to render this broader service to the nation. The Armed Forces are permitted to determine the qualifications of those accepted for the military and while they are doing this, positive findings on any usefulness should be sought after. The necessity for examining the whole man on the basis of his ability to do any useful service is not only essential as far as the civilian effort is concerned, but it has an immediate direct, and continuing effect upon military manpower and logistical problems. There should be an appraisal classification of individuals according to their degree of actual usefulness. A system of functional appraisal whereby manpower can be divided into recognizable sub-divisions must be developed. The underlying premise here is that the total national defense effort demands that a man be accepted for what he can do, rather than reject him for what he cannot do."

It would seem that the above is a prescription for the type of people-catalogueing and direction that would accompany any kind of universal national service plan. Indeed, universal national service would seem to be an even more potent tool for achieving the state goals of Selective Service. Everybody would be inventoried and rated for usefulness in occupational and activity categories which they had

no part in creating. They would then be directly compelled to work at tasks that are in the "national interest." Undoubtedly, a touch of legitimacy would be extended to the whole operation by employing the conscript labor at various tasks of social uplift.

In the November, 1965 issue of its monthly internal publication SELECTIVE SERVICE, the System proudly ran the text of a letter which is described as a request for occupational deferment from military service as far back as 1778." The content of the letter, which is addressed to the Governor of New York, and the fact that Selective Service chose to call attention to it, are an excellent capsule summary of the meaning of the System:

"To Governor Clinton

Claremount, 19 Novr, 1778

As you were so Obligen as to indulge me with an exemption from Military Duty for my workmen, who were Employed in Building my farm house, I am encouraged to request the Same favor for those to be employed in rebuilding my late Dwelling House - Many Hands must Necessarily be engaged as the House is pretty large, such as Masons, Carpenters, Brickburners Labourers & Lime Breakers and Burners -- I hope for an Exemption for the present for my Stonebreakers & Lime Mkers, who are Conrad Lasher Junr & Henry Timmerman both in Capt Tiel Rockavellers Company of the Camp -- Also for Phil Schultus under Capt Phillip Smith of the Manor as a Labourer -- if Yr Excely will favour me my Dauahs (daughters) can bring up the Certifycate as they propose waiting upon Mrs. Clinton, to whom I beg you'll be pleased to present my Best Respects

I am

your Exelys

Humble Servant

Margrt. Livingston"

In the spirit of 1778, the Selective Service System of today is every bit as important in coercing the nation's youth into serving the rich and powerful at home as it is in conscripting them to fight against the people of Vietnam.

The civilian victims of the tyranny of the classification and deferment system outnumber by a large margin those who are already in the armed forces or have been classified as "available." They represent a political force of much greater potential. It would therefore seem that people who are organizing around the draft issue should try to devise ways to publicize the coercive nature of the classification and deferment system and the undemocratic way in which the classification categories are created and administered. Several tactics suggest themselves.

On the national level we should not miss the opportunity for attacking the entire manpower channeling system when the Selective Service enabling legislation comes up for debate in Congress. Some of the demands that might be made are the: (1) The committees which formulate the manpower classification criteria be compelled to hold open hearings; (2) that they publish the full text of all their deliberations; (3) that a thirty to sixty day appeal period follow the formulation and initial publication of new manpower "guidelines" before they acquire official standing; and (4) that representation on the committees of such left-out segments of the population as teachers, students, and the unskilled poor be required by law. The slogan might be "No classification without representation."

At the local level, the main thrust could be toward exposure of the unrepresentative nature of the draft boards which decide whether or not a person should be made "available" to the military. One argument which might be effective with people is to contrast the "quota" handed to a board which presides over a district in which most registrants are well off with the quota for a board which inventories poor people. It is virtually certain that the former board will be shielding most of its registrants occupational deferment categories, will be reporting few "availables," and will be receiving a small quota. The other board will be making virtually everyone "available" and will be receiving a heavy quota. Local Draft Boards are required to divulge the boundaries of their jurisdictions and their current Report of Availability and Summary of Classification. In addition, they must supply the names (but not addresses) of members of the board to any registrant of that board.

Finally, we should take advantage of the occupational deferment guidelines themselves by:

(1) Publicizing the divisions that the classification system opens up between people in the same life situation. For example, a high school physics teacher is considered to have a critical occupation -- the French teacher down the hall is not. A vocational trades teacher has a "critical" occupation -- most of his students will probably be drafted.

(2) Openly and legally counseling "Draft Dodging" when working with young people by telling them what kind of training is available (or not available, as the case may be). A leaflet designed for youths not going to college might read:

"DODGE THE DRAFT -- IT'S LEGAL!"

The military and business rulers of the United States have decided that young men who are valuable to business cannot be taken away to become soldiers in Vietnam. They have told your local draft-board that if you are now, or are training to become a jig and template maker, you should be allowed to escape the draft. A jig and template maker "builds forms, jigs, fixtures, and templates of wood,

metal, and other materials for use as guides or standards by other workers in mass production. Studies blueprints and lays out, cuts and assembles component parts, using a variety of wood and metal-working tools and equipment. Works to close tolerances and checks dimensions with precision measuring devices." (Employer's Inventory of Critical Manpower)

If you would like to become a jig and template maker in order to dodge the draft, see your high school counselor or local employment service. While you're there, ask about the many other good draft-dodging jobs -- such as machinist, instrument repairman, dental technician, or airplane mechanic.

For more details on jobs or training that you can get to avoid the draft and stay out of Vietnam, write to:

Executive Secretary,  
Interagency Advisory Committee on  
Essential Activities and Critical  
Occupations, Bureau of Employment  
Security, U.S. Department of Labor,  
Washington, D.C.

(This article was written by Peter Henig of the National staff of the Radical Education Project of SDS, and was first printed in New Left Notes of January 20, 1967.)

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