

# *Abolish Slavery!*

## *Part III*

**S**ome of those who argue for conscription-slavery concede that it would be wrong to draft someone so that he might defend *himself* against some remote Enemy. But, they add, conscription is needed so that Society might be defended against the foreign enemy. But first we must realize that, as the late great individualist Frank Chodorov once put it, “Society are people.” “Society” is, simply, every person except *you*. By what right, then, do A, B, C, and D, put their heads together to decide that E must be enslaved to fight for *their* defense? Surely this is a monstrous moral doctrine. If A, B, C, etc., really feel threatened by some outside invader, then let them take the steps to finance out of their own pockets the military defense supposedly needed to combat that threat; and let *them* either fight in their own defense or hire someone who is willing to do this for them.

There is ample precedent for this: companies and institutions hire guards and night watchmen, millionaires hire bodyguards, etc. So let our fearful patriots either join up themselves or hire people to defend them. Why must the rest of us who either think the Foreign Threat is a lot of nonsense or who consider the alleged defense as bad as the disease, be forced to pay for the protection of those who want it? You and I are not forced to pay for the guards and night watchmen of those who hire them; neither should we be forced to pay for the defense of others on a national scale. And all the more should we not be allowed to enslave unwilling young

men and to pay them traditional slave wages for the privilege of defending us, or to wage a war in which they do not believe or to which they are opposed. Let those who feel threatened defend themselves or hire willing men for their defense. Any other set-up is enslavement and confiscation of private property for the benefit of others, i.e., is large-scale robbery.

Some libertarian inclined students at the University of Chicago have recently launched the Council for a Volunteer Military, dedicated to abolishing conscription, and they have managed to enlist supporters from all over the ideological spectrum, from Norman Thomas and James Farmer on the Left, to Karl Hess, Barry Goldwater's speech writer, and Professor Milton Friedman. But, in an effort to achieve respectability, they have made their arguments almost purely technical and pragmatic: that the costs of a volunteer army would not be very great, that continual training of new recruits is costly and inefficient, etc. While the Council recognizes the injustice of enslaving a few men at low wages and thus "taxing" them more than the rest of the citizenry, their emphasis on technical and pragmatic economics misses the really crucial point. The problem is not the inefficiency of a conscript army; the problem is the gross immorality — indeed, the massive criminality — of drafting young men to be kicked around for years of their lives, and then to kill or be killed against their will. If this fundamental moral consideration is not "respectable" these days, then so much the worse for respectability. In true pragmatic fashion, moreover, the Council for a Volunteer Military concedes the wisdom of universal military training as an emergency reserve. With this kind of temporizing, draft-slavery will never be abolished. To achieve abolition the monstrosity of conscription must be sung out, loud and clear and unabashed.