

## IS THIS WAR NECESSARY?

By Jack Schwartzman

If Henry George were alive today, in 1991, he would analyze the current conflict in the Persian Gulf with the same precise and chilling clairvoyance as he did in 1879 in his world-famous Progress and Poverty (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1979), where he discussed the basic origins of war. "Man is social in his nature," George began (p. 509), and man's general bent is to live in peaceful association and harmony with his fellow-humans. However, obstacles to such association arise because of artificially-created shortages of world resources, together with deliberately-induced suspicions of "differences...in language, custom, tradition, religion," (p. 510) and they engender rivalry, fear, and hatred. "With these differences, prejudices grow, animosities spring up, contact easily produces quarrels, aggression begets aggression, and wrong kindles revenge.... Warfare becomes the chronic and seemingly natural relation of societies to each other, and the powers of men are expended...in mutual slaughter..." (pp. 510-11)

What are we fighting for in the Persian Gulf? Oil, land, colonization, conquest? They are all summarized in one phrase: control of energy. Is the world "running out" of energy?

In his recent book, Population Matters (New Brunswick, U.S.A., Transaction Publishers, 1990), Professor Julian Simon unequivocally declared: "There is no reason to believe that the supply of energy is finite, or that the price will not continue its long-run decrease.... The measure of the future oil supply must therefore be at least as large as the sun's seven billion or so years of future life." (p. 80) He supported his contention with unquestionably valid statistics.

This war, therefore, is not only totally destructive and horrifying (and unending, since it will spawn future wars), but, even from a cold-blooded, economic, point of view, totally senseless! Alas for humanity!