

# The Henry George News

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## Panel Focuses on Tomorrow's Cities

The Henry George School co-sponsored a two-day conference on the "Future of the Metropolis," with the City University of New York Graduate Program in Political Science, on February 13-14, 1980, at the Graduate Center of the University, in New York City.

Henry George School Director, Philip Finkelstein, chaired a panel on urban political economy that included the former mayor of New York City, John V. Lindsay, Professor Seymour Mann of John Jay College, Walter Rybeck, Special Assistant to Rep. Henry Reuss (D.-Wisc.), whose talk appears in this issue and Professor Narayan Viswanathan of Adelphi University's School of Social Work, who compared the various schools of political economic thought.

### The Uncertain Future of the Metropolis

by Walter Rybeck†

I learned about this conference on the "Future of the Metropolis" just after returning from the ruins of ancient Greece. I could not help but visualize future people, two or three centuries from now, wandering through the ruins of our cities. Would they be puzzling over the eclipse of a great civilization, as I was at the haunting temples of Delphi and the cyclopean walls at Mycenae?

These unsettling thoughts are not mere metaphor. Pessimism intrudes insistently on anyone who tries to project the future from current trends. Most signs of our times add up to a grim forecast of what tomorrow holds.

The single element that makes me apprehensive about the future of our cities is our land system. Tentacles of our misguided land policies are choking almost every vital aspect of metropolitan life. This is doubly worrisome, because the full dimensions of the land problem have barely surfaced in the public consciousness. To put it in the vernacular, most of us don't know what's eating us.

We have scarcely begun to identify the causes of today's city land problems. This is not to denigrate the legions of good folk—officials and citizens alike—who are trying desperately to cope with the daily disasters. But without a better notion of what is producing these disasters, we are unlikely to stem the flood.

A major problem, certainly, is our distorted land system that operates around the clock and around the calendar, and under the full sanction of the law. It

*continued on page 7*

### Urban Political Economy

by Philip Finkelstein\*

Political economy has had something of a rebirth in these post-keynesian times. The macro-folk, with their equations, and the value-free researchers with their abstractions, are still very much part of the economic scene, but there is some evidence of renewed respect for, and an interest in, a more discursive form of economics, ranging from our most

*continued on page 7*

## New Trustees Announced

Jacob Himmelstein and Sydney Mayers were elected to fill two vacancies on the Board of Trustees at the Henry George School in New York, during the annual members meeting on February 14th. Mr. Mayers, an attorney, is a long-time Georgist, and resident of New York City, and Mr. Himmelstein is a practicing accountant and an active member of the school in Philadelphia, who resides in Mount Airy, Pa.

At the trustees meeting, held the same day, the following were nominated to fill the vacancy created by the death of Arnold Weinstein, as a member of the corporation:

George Collins  
Sydney Mayers

Stanley Sinclair  
Si Winters

The election will take place during the March Board meeting.

The current Board of Trustees, elected to serve until February, 1981, comprises:

Paul S. Nix, President  
Oscar B. Johannsen,  
Vice President  
George Collins, Secretary  
Lancaster Greene, Treasurer  
Steven Cord  
William Davidson  
Jacob Himmelstein

Mitchell Lurio  
Sydney Mayers  
Jerome Medowar  
Dean Meridith  
Fryda Ossias  
Leonard Recker  
Stanley Sinclair  
Si Winters

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Chairman, House Committee on Banking, Finance, and  
Urban Affairs.