

NEW YORK LECTURES REACH DIVERSE AUDIENCES

The New York HGS was even busier than usual around the last weekend of February. On Friday the 23rd the School offered *Perestroika in Russia and Hungary*, the second of three Friday night forums scheduled for its winter term. And on Monday the 26th, a lecture in memory of longtime HGS faculty member Cyril Harvey (see last month's *Newsletter*) was given by George Collins, with Richard Barbuto and HGS teacher Nan Braman.

Speakers for the *Perestroika* forum were Arnold Bratov, a Russian playwright who has been living in the United States for only one year, and Professor George Schmidt, a physicist at Stevens Institute of Technology. Dr. Schmidt, originally from Budapest, was a member of the 1956 Hungarian pro-democracy movement, and fled the country when the movement was defeated. Both speakers were able to provide a personal view of the momentous changes in Eastern Europe. Mr. Bratov, who has a play now running in Moscow, compared the concerns of writers and artists in the two societies. Dr. Schmidt summarized Hungarian history, and suggested that, for the countries of Eastern Europe, democratic national self-determination is often more important than economics. The program was moderated by Prof. Norman Horing, also of the Stevens Institute, who has written an *Open Letter to the Communist World* (see the December '89 issue of the *Newsletter*).

After their presentations the speakers fielded questions left and right. The chief areas of concern were the potential for a reunified Germany, and the preservation of socialist-style economic rights (i.e. the right to housing and medical care) should Eastern European nations fully embrace capitalism. A cordially dissenting view (to that of her husband) was presented by Mrs. Schmidt, who, while conceding that "full employment" policies in Hungary led to massive stagnation, held that the political structures emerging in Eastern Europe must provide for people's basic needs if they are to succeed. Discussion continued as everyone was treated to a selection of delicious Hungarian pastries.



Prof. George Schmidt



Prof. Norman Horing



Mr. Arnold Bratov

The selection of Harlem's Touro College as the site for the Cyril Harvey Memorial Lecture was suggested by Richard Barbuto, who worked with Cyril Harvey on the Harlem Land Value Tax Project in the early 80's. This was the neighborhood where Mr. Harvey lived and worked, established the Harlem House of Commons, and tirelessly promoted, as George Collins put it in the title of his address, "the philosophy of social justice".

The lecture was the concluding event of Touro's Black History Month schedule. After a brief welcome to the college and the series by Jamal Joseph, Touro's Director of Student Affairs, Richard Barbuto introduced the work of the Henry George School. Then, Nan Braman spoke on the life and work of her friend and fellow teacher, using biographical material on Mr. Harvey's early life, which was provided by Sydney Bridgeman Harvey. She remembered a man who was too honest to be a pool shark and too gentle to be a boxer, yet was skilled at both -- big, energetic, magnetic, and passionate about justice.

George Collins's lecture followed: a stirring description of the justice and practicality of Henry George's vision, using examples from around the world, and down the street; a newly-modeled subway station opened out onto an entire block of rubble-strewn vacant land, along a busy thoroughfare. The audience had not far to look to see the applicability of George's ideas, and they received the speech with enthusiasm. A reception followed.

The final Friday night forum of the spring term, *Muckrakers and Reformers* with Stan Rubenstein, is scheduled for March 23rd at the New York School.

"HARD DRUGS & HARD DECISIONS" IN L.A.

On February 23rd, in the second of its Final Friday dinners devoted to "Internal Pollution", The Alumni Group of the Los Angeles HGS examined "Crack in the Window: Supplying the Retail Market in the Age of Cocaine." Invited speakers were Craig Peters and John Myner of the LAPD, and John Vernon, entrepreneur in the food business and State Chair of the Libertarian Party.

Some of the issues covered included: the corrupting influence of the drug trade by which "a policeman offered more cash than he's likely to earn the rest of his life is facing intolerable and unfair temptation" (one Mexican policeman was offered \$35,000 to simply go to the other side of town while planes landed and unloaded); the violation of due-process under the new anti-racketeering law (the moment you are charged with a crime, the government seizes all your assets) which is being extended beyond drug-related cases; the high cost of financing the war on drugs (e.g., many more prisons will need to be built); and the fact that anti-drug laws are creating a large new class of criminals.

According to The Alumni Group's flyer: "Former addicts... can go to McDonald's for \$5 an hour, or... get \$5 a minute continuing the illegal activity that supported their habit. What are they likely to do? What would you be likely to do? The question remains. Do social rights transcend individual rights? Does individual freedom include the right to choose hard drugs? Does society have the right to... abridge the Bill of Rights...?"

Craig Peters and his partner John Myner agreed to disagree over the legalization issue. Peters pointed out that while the discussion may be philosophical, hundreds of thousands of babies are being born in American already addicted to hard drugs. Peters, who had done 14 of his 18 years of police work in drug enforcement, also reported that high schoolers can earn \$200 to \$300 a week selling drugs to schoolmates.

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**1990 Conference in
Santa Fe - see inside**