

Sydney Mayers

VIEWS THE NEWS

The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, which was ceremoniously inaugurated on November 21, is a monument to the imagination, skill and daring of the designers, engineers and builders who planned and constructed it. Unfortunately, it is also a monument to the system of landholding under which this magnificent bridge, erected by and for the people, will serve to increase land values on Staten Island, not for the benefit of the community, but for that of the private landowners into whose pockets the rent will flow.

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Following two major jewel robberies in New York, from the American Museum of Natural History and from the Seventh Regiment Armory, Aleksei Y. Kudryavtsev, Deputy Police Minister of the Russian Republic, reported that "rare and priceless" articles had been stolen from Moscow's Historical Museum in "one of the most daring thefts in many years." There seems to be no field of enterprise in which the Soviet Union does not endeavor to outperform the U.S.A.

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Although it is illegal to manufacture, distribute or possess liquor in Mississippi, this sovereign state has imposed a profitable tax on the "importation" of that commodity, which its citizens "import" mostly from the less teetotaling state of Louisiana. It is pleasant to report that, not only are the sellers of the juice and the drinkers thereof happy, but so are Louisiana and Mississippi — proving anew that trade is a mutually agreeable enterprise.

In his 1964 Thanksgiving Proclamation, President Johnson said: "Although we have been blessed with unsurpassed prosperity, we recognize that poverty and want exist throughout the world — even among us." This frank statement, almost an echo, pointedly reminds us that we have not yet solved the "Problem" posed by Henry George in 1879: "Why, in spite of increase in productive power, do wages tend to a minimum which will give but a bare living?"

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Britain's new Labor government, having taken office by the slim margin of four seats in Parliament, has briskly moved to nationalize industry and increase taxes. The consensus among the politically sagacious is that the incumbent British administration will last about six months — and that, dear readers, is not a *non-sequitur*.

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The Soviet economist Belousov has called for the extension to heavy industry and all other branches of the economy of a profit incentive system already put in effect in some consumer-goods industries "to replace cumbersome centralized planning." It is mighty intriguing to observe how often the USSR turns to "capitalistic" devices when it is in an economic jam.

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While cogitating on the above, it is noteworthy that another dispatch from Moscow reports that the Russian Federation, the Soviet Union's biggest republic, has eased restrictions on private garden plots and cattle. May we boldly wonder if this indicates a non-socialist trend?