I affirm the resolution be it resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.

O1:

Definitions:

Private - controlled or owned by individual people or companies, rather than by the government

Source: Macmillan Dictionary

Appropriation - a deliberate act of acquisition of something, often without the permission of the owner

Source: Vocabulary.com

FW:

Value: Justice

The usage of the word “unjust” in the resolution is a direct reference to justice and injustice. Since the 1967 outer space treaty states outer space is essentially public property and not to be owned by a single, independent entity, the unjust part of the resolution refers to society and its members as a whole. Thus, we have to prefer the value of justice since it is most relevant to the wording of the resolution.

Criterion: Upholding a collective exploration of outer space

**A collective effort to pursue space exploration empowers us to reap the benefits of space exploration without appropriation by private entities**

Roberts ’21, Spencer Roberts (a science writer, musician, ecologist, and rooftop solar engineer from Colorado), **“We Need a Socialist Vision for Space Exploration,” Jacobin, September 8, 2021,** <https://jacobinmag.com/2021/09/socialist-space-exploration-publicly-funded-nasa-education-futurism>

Finally, a socialist vision for space exploration could enable us to reach our full potential to venture into the unknown. History enshrines the intrepid explorers, but the true heroes of the space age are the workers at ground control. Yuri Gagarin made it home safely because of his command crews stationed from Baikonur to Khabarovsk. Apollo 13 famously called on Houston when they had a problem. Today, many of our brightest astrophysicists use their talents for science and education instead. That doesn’t mean, however, colonizing Mars. terraforming will reinstate the magnetic dynamo that once deflected the solar winds now stripping away its depleted atmosphere. In fact, everything we have learned from researching Mars has reinforced the importance of protecting the fragile atmosphere of our ho me planet. While piloted space flights may be useful in some situations, we should place far more emphasis on collaboratively building robots like the ones that have taught us about our planetary neighbors. In today’s space race, these initiatives compete for funding. By prioritizing cooperation over colonization, however, we could pursue them all. We could attempt to retrieve raw materials for green energy infrastructure from decommissioned satellites and uninhabited asteroids instead of mines in the Global South. We could search the solar system for extraterrestrial life by flying rotorcrafts into the hydrocarbon-rich atmosphere of Titan and boring submarines into the icy subsurface ocean of Europa. We could strive for the first landing on Pluto, Eris, or even beyond — not to plant a flag, but seed a concept of what we can collectively achieve.

So the criterion is upholding a collectivized vision for space exploration. Prefer this as a

collectivized vision for space exploration meets our definition of justice by 1) ensuring there is an

equitable distribution of resources and

2) ensuring participation in decision-making of all nations and peoples as space is explored

and utilized in a cooperative manner If I prove that the appropriation of

outer space by private entities is a rejection of this collectivized vision, we must affirm.

# Contention 1

**The appropriation of outer space by private entities will lead to the worsening of current issues on the planet.**

**The appropriation of outer space ignores problems here on Earth and we must collaborate to solve**

**Levine ’15,** Nick Levine (an MPhil candidate in history of science at the University of Cambridge),**“Democratize the Universe,” Jacobin, March 21, 2015,**

[**https://jacobinmag.com/2015/03/space-industry-extraction-levine**](https://jacobinmag.com/2015/03/space-industry-extraction-levine)

**Last summer, the bipartisan**[**ASTEROIDS Act**](https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/5063)**was introduced in Congress. The legislation’s aim is to grant US corporations property rights over any natural resources — like the platinum-group metals used in electronics — that they extract from asteroids.** **The legal framework governing the economic development of outer space will have enormous effects on the distribution of wealth and income in the Milky Way and beyond. We could fight for a galactic democracy, where the proceeds of the space economy are distributed widely. Or we could accept the trickle-down astronomics anticipated by the ASTEROIDS Act, which would allow for the concentration of vast amounts of economic and political power in the hands of a few corporations and the most technologically developed nations. Starting in the 1960s, a coalition of underdeveloped nations, many recently decolonized, asserted their strength in numbers in the United Nations by forming a caucus known as the**[**Group of 77**](http://www.g77.org/)**.** **In the early 1970s, this bloc announced its intention to establish a “new international economic order,” which found its expression in a series of UN treaties governing international regions, like sea beds and outer space, that they hoped would spread the economic benefits of the commons more equitably, with special attention to less developed nations.** For these countries — as well as for the nervous US business interests that opposed them — their plan to “socialize the moon,” as some put it at the time, was the first step toward a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and power in human society. It will be years before the industrialization of outer space is economically viable, if it ever is. But the legal framework that would shape that transition is being worked out now. **The ASTEROIDS Act was submitted on behalf of those who would benefit most from a laissez-faire extraterrestrial system**. If we leave the discussion about celestial property rights to the business interests that monopolize it now, any dream of economic democracy in outer space will go the way of jetpacks, flying cars, and the fifteen-hour workweek. **Whether and how we should go to space are not profound philosophical questions, at least not primarily. What’s at stake is not just the “stature of man,” as Hannah Arendt**[**put it**](http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-conquest-of-space-and-the-stature-of-man)**, but a political-economic struggle over the future of the celestial commons, which could result in a dramatic intensification of inequality — or a small step for humankind toward a more egalitarian state of affairs on our current planet. We might also question whether mining asteroids would be detrimental to our current planet’s environment in the medium term. If we don’t find a renewable way to blast off into outer space, the exploitation of these resources could lead to an intensification of, not a move away from, the fossil-fuel economy. If the environmental impact of space mining turns out to be large, it would be analogous to fracking — a technological development that gives us access to new resources, but with devastating ecological side effects — and ought to be opposed on similar grounds. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967, signed by over ninety countries in the heat of the first sprint to the moon, rejected the notion that celestial bodies fell under the legal principle of *res nullius* — meaning that outer space was empty territory that could be claimed for a nation through occupation.** It forbade the “national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means” of outer space. **But the treaty was not just restrictive. It also had a positive requirement for extraterrestrial conduct: “The exploration and use of outer space,” it declared, “shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind.” However, nobody knew what this would mean in practice: was it a call for egalitarian economics, or an empty proclamation of liberal benevolence? Organizing around an issue of such scale may seem utopian, but it’s also necessary. From regulating capital to mitigating climate change, the problems that confront us are inherently global in scope and require commensurate strategies.**

**Billionaires traveling to space exacerbates climate change with money that could be better spent to solve global poverty**.

**Haworth ’21**, Holly Haworth (is a writer, educator, and naturalist currently based in the Georgia Piedmont**), “Billionaires Do Not Need to Go to Space Our whole planet is a spaceship, darn it,” Sierra, July 16, 2021**,

https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/billionaires-do-not-need-go-space

**Last week, billionaire Richard Branson soared high above the earth in a rocket, to the edge of space.** The flight marked the launch of the commercial space travel that Branson’s company Virgin Galactic plans to begin offering next year, setting off what he calls “the dawn of a new space age.” On Virgin Galactic’s global livestream of Branson’s flight, red-hot streaks of rocket propellant blasted from the engines against the blue sky over New Mexico. The mood was one of levity. Like the Cold War moon landing, as a public spectacle it brimmed with hopeful possibility and served as a demonstration of what we are capable of when we direct our resources and imagination toward a goal. A montage advertised the Virgin Group (Galactic is just one of some 400 companies that Branson owns), and a voiceover intoned, “If we can do this, imagine what else we can do.”  **Two days earlier, Death Valley reached 130 degrees Fahrenheit,**[**the hottest temperature on Earth ever recorded**](https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-a-warming-planet/we-need-the-whole-of-government-climate-fight-that-biden-promised)**. More than 31 million American people who were not floating giddily in space were under heat advisories, in the third major heat wave of the summer. The associate director of the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford, Friederike Otto, told *The Guardian*, “This is by far the largest jump [in temperature] in the record I have ever seen,” a statement that echoed Neil Armstrong’s “one giant leap for mankind.” If we were seeing the dawn of a new space age, we were also seeing the dawn of a much hotter Earth—and traveling in rockets is arguably the most carbon-spewing thing an individual can do. As climate change accelerates on the planet, the world’s wealthiest people seem to be seeking diversions of entertainment as far from the earth as they can get, beyond the carbon-laden atmosphere, and into the few minutes of microgravity that such space flights will afford.** Jeff Bezos, the richest person in the world, will also escape Earth’s atmosphere for a few moments next week, if all goes as planned, in a rocket made by his own nascent space-travel company Blue Origin. And Elon Musk’s company SpaceX promises to revolutionize space tourism, “with the ultimate goal of enabling people to live on other planets,” according to its website. **All three companies say they have a goal of making space accessible to more people. Tickets for a rocket seat currently range from $250,000 to $28 million. Meanwhile, many continue to lack access here on Earth to clean air and water, and nine out of 10 people on the planet don’t fly in an airplane in a given year.  If it seems ludicrous to look to the world’s wealthiest to change the course of climate policy, government regulations, and carbon consumption, it’s important to remember that they have already done just that. SpaceX**[**has spent at least $17.5 million**](https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/spacex/lobbying?id=D000029147)**lobbying the federal government over the past 10 years, and Blue Origin**[**has spent $7 million**](https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2021&id=D000069501)**, while Virgin Galactic**[**tossed a quarter of a million**](https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2020&id=D000042146)**at Washington politicians just last year—all to clear the way for their space tourism industry.  The opportunity to escape Earth’s gravity for the weightlessness of space makes many people starry-eyed. But while Musk, Bezos, and Branson are building spaceships, we already live on one. It's perfectly designed for life in space, safely transporting all of its inhabitants at hurtling speeds through the universe, a state-of-the-art ship from which we can see the stars every night for free, and freely breathe the atmosphere. The money and power spent trying to leave it could be used to take care of this ship we’ve been given, ensuring that all of us have a ticket to the experience of a lifetime.**

**Impact: There are current issues on the planet, ranging from power distribution issues to climate change that will be only worsened by the appropriation of outer space by private entities, which does not support a collectivized vision for space exploration and is thus unjust.**

# Contention 2:

**The appropriation of outer space by private entities cannot justly be done by said entities**

**The appropriation of outer space by private entities points to a dangerous, dystopian future.**

**Roberts ’21**, Spencer Roberts (a science writer, musician, ecologist, and rooftop solar engineer from Colorado**), “We Need a Socialist Vision for Space Exploration,” Jacobin, September 8, 2021,**

https://jacobinmag.com/2021/09/socialist-space-exploration-publicly-funded-nasa-education-futurism

Mission objectives have changed as well**. While perhaps always mythic, the once allegedly valiant aspirations of the space program have given way to openly touristic and militaristic goals. Corporations pursuing commercial space flight have received billions in public financing, and the US Space Force alone already has nearly three quarters the total budget of NASA. The true ethos**

**of space exploration, however, is one of public works and education. Peering into the void of space inspires the deepest questions facing humanity: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? While a space program catering to the science fiction fantasies of billionaires is decidedly dystopian, conceptualizing space exploration as an educational mission to remotely**

**probe the depths of the galaxy can help animate a more equitable vision of futurism.**

**The appropriation of outer space by private entities is leading to dangerous cost cutting in pursuit of profit.**

**Roberts 2 ’21**, Spencer Roberts (a science writer, musician, ecologist, and rooftop solar engineer from Colorado), **“We Need a Socialist Vision for Space Exploration,” Jacobin, September 8, 2021,**

https://jacobinmag.com/2021/09/socialist-space-exploration-publicly-funded-nasa-education-futurism

**In 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin flew higher and orbited longer than Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos combined aboard Vostok 1, the world’s first piloted space flight.** Upon his return to

Earth, Gagarin became a global celebrity, traveling the world and recounting what it felt like to drift weightless and see the planet from above. For a brief moment, he transcended the boundaries

of the Cold War, greeting cheering crowds in both Soviet and US-allied countries, capturing our collective fascination with the cosmos. The Vostok mission was meticulously planned and engineered, its cosmonauts trained for years**. Its successor, Soyuz 1, was a different story. The 7K-OK spacecraft had been hastily constructed, its three unmanned flight tests all ending in failure. According to one account, Gagarin helped detail over two hundred structural concerns in a report urging the flight be called off. It’s rumored that he even tried to take his fellow cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov’s place piloting the doomed mission. In the end Komarov’s parachute failed to deploy and he burst into flames on reentry, plummeting at forty meters per second into the Earth.** In aeronautics, the margin between triumph and tragedy is narrow. **While hubris may have been Soyuz 1’s fatal flaw, the pursuit of profit has similarly incentivized corner cutting in the US space program. NASA, once the crown jewel of the public sector, has been slowly sold off to private contractors in the neoliberal era**. **Since 2020, NASA astronauts have ridden SpaceX Falcon 9 rockets into orbit, a model that has raised safety concerns among engineers and logged more failures since its debut in 2006 than the space shuttle did in thirty years. Recently, another NASA contractor, Virgin Galactic, was grounded for investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration after its pilots failed to notify the agency that its celebrated Unity flight was veering into commercial airspace.**

**Impact: The appropriation of outer space by private entities can and will lead to a worse future overall by lending itself towards or more militarized view and cheaping out on basic requirements in the pursuit of profit.**