

# Manifesto of a Space Nation

## Asgardia Constitution (version 9)

This document represents many hours of thoughtful compromise. I salute those who have devoted their time and energy.

I do have some concerns. I don't see the Constitution embracing the probable lifestyles in a space habitat.

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(1) Personal possessions will be dramatically less than what we're used to here on earth. Our important stuff will be all contained on a laptop. Our EVA suits, repair tools, oxygen allotment will be rentals from the commons. Sure, we will have our own tooth brushes and a few changes of clothes for different occasions, but these are easily replaceable. So this insistence on "property rights" will become an oxymoron.

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(2) We will need MONEY in its electronic form, simply because money is more convenient than are the hassles associated with physical barter. But I suggest we can earn equal "wages" or "salaries" for all members of Asgardia. The person cleaning the air filters is just as important as the mayor or chief programmer. Every task in a space habitat needs to be done, otherwise the community will suffer. So equal "spendable" incomes for all, but those overachievers can be awarded extra voting shares by their peers. We will achieve a society where social stature is based solely on merit.

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(3) Privacy as we know it will be totally compromised. We won't have

much individual privacy. Cams, audio listeners and sensors will be installed everywhere in the habitat. The Constitution doesn't seem to take this reality to account. Certainly, we will need new definitions about what is public and private.

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(4) Nothing in the Constitution addresses the problems of childbirth in space. The dilemma becomes acute if the habitat has less than one-earth gravity. Most Sci-Fi authors anticipate a dramatic adaption of newborns to the lighter gravity of an orbiting habitat. The children will have fragile bones and underdeveloped heart-lung systems. Lower limbs may become atrophied. These children may never live comfortably on earth. Will we condemn them to living the rest of their lives in ultralight gravity?

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You suggested a thought experiment. Fine. Let's go for it. But I apologize in advance since I don't own the subtle talents of Arkady & Boris Strugatsky.

Let's review the bone of contention. RESTRICTION 11: "INFLUENCE ON THE FREE MARKET. The Government of Asgardia will not act or legislate towards any artificial control of the free market, unless to protect individual freedoms and rights stated in the Constitution and/or to assure fair competition."

Let's assume Asgardia has established a habitat in high earth orbit. It relies on imported honey bees to pollinate its crops. XYZ corp offers to supply Asgardia with mechanical bees that are programmed to perform the same functions as natural bees.

The Constitution will rubberstamp this because natural bees have been known to sting agricultural workers on occasion. The mechanical

bees represent an improvement and don't infringe on individual rights of citizens.

The mechanical bees replace natural bees, and everything appears fine until harvest time. The wheat and rice crops yield 90% less grain than normal. Suddenly we have an urgent crisis. Field workers checked all variable from one harvest to the next. The only difference was the introduction of mechanical bees.

XYZ had signed a 5-year contract to supply mechanical bees. But Asgardia's council stopped all payments to XYZ corp and declared a moratorium until the matter could be resolved.

XYZ went to court and sued the government. Its plea cited the Asgardia Constitution which states Asgardia cannot impose artificial restrictions on public corps. XYZ's advocates argued there was no definite proof that mechanical bees caused the depleted harvest. By Constitutional law Asgardia had to yield to XYZ corp, even though it would likely suffer massive food shortages down the road.

In this case, XYZ's guilt or innocence was never conclusively proven. The judgment came via precedent from the Constitution.

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As a communist libertarian, I favor individual freedoms in most endeavors. The economy is a special case, and governments would be remiss if they allow markets to follow the influences of supply and demand. Without constant monitoring, you end up with ridiculous valuations. At one time a wagon load of tulips was worth the entire continent of Australia. More recently, 25-city blocks in Tokyo was worth the whole state of Oregon.

I concede these are extreme instances. But an entire class of parasites earn comfortable incomes by trading on unequal prices of similar valuations. Governments that let entrepreneurs loose without regulations will invite absurd bubble booms and subsequent depressions.

Entrepreneurs SHOULD DEFINITELY earn the right to do business. This happens today in the form of required licenses. Otherwise anyone can sell flammable toys to children. Anyone can seed toxic chemicals in bottled water. Anyone can sell you beer spiked with arsenic. Asgardia should outlaw any citizen from selling in the local market unless their goods and services can be demonstrated to be safe and beneficial.

Personally I would go further. I would require vendors to make full disclosures of their goods or services. They would be required to specify the materials in the product as well as materials used to make the product.

Karl Polyani may be considered a contrarian among current economists, but that doesn't prove his analysis is wrong. In fact, popular economists have led to our present dilemma where 1% of the citizens control 60% of the total wealth.

Until an economist proves otherwise, the maxim of Karl Marx "Capital cannot be separated from those producing that capital" is good as gold.

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First, I want to commend you and your colleagues for the Constitution as a whole. You got off to a great start with declarations of human rights and freedoms. But with the restrictions you fell back in ten-commandment mode. In practice, constitutions should avoid negative statements. But I can swallow most of them except for Restriction 11.

I realize that Karl Marx was very naïve about applying his insights. In fact, there are no examples of pure communism on the scale of large municipalities or nation states. Sweden came the closest to social democracy in the last century. When the income tax rose above 60%, the smart money had absconded to Germany and Switzerland. In practice, the Swedish government punished the prosperous middle class, but the industrialists and tycoons ran off Scott-free.

I suspect you grew up in eastern Europe and suffered from a kind of anti-communism. The Russian revolution turned out worse than the French revolution. After brief periods of idealism, the vacuum was filled by dictators (Napoleon & Stalin). In truth, Russia and China were the worst nations for Marxism to take root, since the common folk had been oppressed for centuries by decadent Emperors and Czars. No one really knew what to do with newfound freedom, once it fell in their laps.

None of the failures in application discredit the valid analysis of Karl Marx. When capital is hoarded by a few oligarchs, the broad economy develops inefficiencies and imbalances. If governments leave these to fester, they bring suffering and gross injustices to their populations. Capital should be part and parcel of the commons.

I wouldn't trust my fellow humans to control or divvy incentive capital. I wouldn't trust myself to control or divvy incentive capital which amounts to 900% of the money needed for the day-to-day transactions, what economists call M1. Likewise, M2, M3, M4 is money that never circulates. It's funny money or monopoly money. Financiers do all kinds of mischief with monopoly money. I'd rather place the funny-incentive money under the control of a computer model.

The computer model would restrict the amount of currency to the total of natural and human resources. Thus creating zero inflation for centuries. It would force vendors to market durable products that were least harmful to the underlying ecology. This agenda would be vitally important to a self-sustaining space habitat.

Entrepreneurs who have beneficial goods and services to offer would NOT be hindered in any way. In fact, they would be encouraged, since the pretenders wouldn't obtain a license at all. Michał Klekowicki, you want to let unlicensed vendors sell junk to our citizens. I declare this attitude is a recipe for disaster.

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Michał Klekowicki. I apologize if my arguments impinged on your

character. I know your efforts to form the Asgardian Constitution stem from the purest of motives.

Where we differ is whether the government should let entrepreneurs react to the influences of supply and demand. You favor a hands-off policy, whereas I favor regulations that ensure goods and services will be healthful and beneficial to citizens.

You claim economics isn't an exact science. Why is that? Because economics is an ARTIFICIAL human construct. Profits and losses are divorced from the health and well-being of earth's ecologies. For instance, public accountants have never tried to incorporate the precepts of Vladimir Vernadsky.

By detailing human damages to the environment, I reckon we could transform economics to an exact science by tying it hand & foot to the underlying ecologies. In fact, I declare it is absolutely necessary that we do this, sooner rather than later. If we can't live in harmony with Nature on earth, how could we expect to furnish a sustainable biosphere in outer space?

If for no other reason, entrepreneurs should be judged on their ability to deliver products with the least harm to the environment. Those who want to flood the marketplace with disposable goods should be banned, disallowed or exiled to Pluto if necessary. I say this because I want to breathe air that as fresh as possible. Let the managers of Exxon Mobile breathe smog if they so desire, but they shouldn't be allowed to force me to breathe their garbage.

If we refuse to regulate our entrepreneurs by ARTIFICIAL means, I dare say other nations as well as the UN will demand that we do so.

A wonderful companion to Karl Polyani's "The Great Transformation" is Sven Beckert's "The Empire of Cotton" which is an empirical case study of Polyani's thesis applied to the global market for cotton. Wheeler-dealers in cotton have been encouraged by developed nations to furnish cotton clothes at the cheapest prices. This has provoked widespread slavery on cotton plantations. It has encouraged

manufacturers to hire teenagers to work 16 hour shifts in sweatshops. It has fostered militant colonialism where rich nations feast on 3rd-world poor.

Asgardia will lose out if it allows entrepreneurs to flood the marketplace with "unfair" goods and services. Asgardia will go bankrupt if allows an elite group of financiers to manipulate the real economy behind closed boardroom doors. I concede that governments have often hindered the best entrepreneurs through ignorance or misunderstandings. All the more reason to elect knowledgeable leaders through a fair and transparent democratic process. Once elected, they must ride herd on multinationals before big business overtakes all functions of government.