

# Lunacy and Moondoggling

by R. E. MORRIS

WHEN we land on the moon will we claim it for the United States? Will we share it freely with others, exclude them entirely or charge them a rent? If we find gold or oil there will it all belong to us? If it should be we find little green men there or on some other planet, who dispute our claim, would we leave quietly or fight for *our* new land? Would we herd them onto reservations, enslave them, assimilate them or annihilate them?

Will fee simple ownership of land be the rule for new settlers? Will priority in time of arrival provide a monopoly in law which transcends without compensation the natural rights of others for all time? In short, will the problems on earth become the problems of the moon, then of Mars, Venus, Jupiter, *et al.*?

Will the land problem, trade barriers, nationalism, imperialism, etc., continue to be secondary to an unending drive for technological and materialistic advances? Or will, perhaps, the view from the moon give us a broader perspective and new priorities? Will we then perhaps perceive the universe as a free gift of nature, the common bounty of all men to which all individuals have equal rights—equal

rights to the firmament as to air, the oceans and space?

Will we establish regenerative conditions of fundamental justice or will we continue economic institutions of privilege for some and charity and control for others—institutions which have led inexorably to moral degeneracy, socialism and civil war? Or will new stars in our eyes blind us even more to the causes of poverty, slums, exploitation of individual by individual, groups by groups, nation by nation?

Will the economics of politics continue to subvert the science of political economy? Will we gradually be more content with *ad hoc* patchwork political amelioration of the effects of economic and social problems? Will we continue to substitute socialized charity for individual justice, training and enculturation for education, force for intelligence to a point of moral debility beyond recovery?

Will we by default drift into a communism of wealth and abandon altogether the freedom of a communism of opportunity? Will our quest for aggregate power and wealth continue to override man's quest for significance in his individual life, in his work, in his natural rights? Probably.

**A quarter-page advertisement in a mid-western newspaper offered "Moon mortgages—unlimited funds available for land development . . . subdivisions, tourist resorts, rocket spaceports and skyrides." (From The Gargoyle)**

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for the community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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