

## **Materialism as a Religion of Exploitation**

Karl Marx had it wrong. Religion (in the traditional sense as he understood it) is not the opiate of the masses. Rather, materialism, the antithesis of religiosity, has become the oppressor of the poor.

As the old socialist might have put it, in a civilized state (as opposed to a police state) the exploitation of people on a national scale requires, among other things, at least two economic classes, each of an adequate size. There must be both an exploiting class large enough to dominate the exploited and there must be an exploited class large enough to provide service to the exploiters. For example, the principal class conflict now existing in the West is rich vs. poor, while in the East, it is male vs. female. In this discussion we are concerned with economic exploitation in the West.

To attain great power within the exploiting class, either as an individual or as a group, the exploiters must be both intelligent and evil (i.e., ruthless, selfish, deceptive, and without sympathy for the exploited class). At the same time, successful exploiters must appear to themselves, to their peers, to their supporters, and, above all, to those being exploited, as admirable and as deserving the privilege of power. Hence, what is needed for successful and enduring exploitation in a society is systematic deception.

That need for deception was met in Western civilization in the eighteenth century by the invention of a new religion for the exploiter class, a religion of the powerful. Its name is Materialism.<sup>1</sup> Its credo was succinctly stated as follows by a Cornell University high priest of Materialism:

"Humans are complex organic machines that die completely with no survival of soul or psyche. Humans and other animals make choices frequently, but these are determined by the interaction of heredity and environment and are not the result of free will. No inherent moral or ethical laws exist. . . .we have no ultimate meaning in life." <sup>2</sup>

For materialists, there are no moral or social obligations. Out of self-interest, most exploiting materialists are careful to avoid denying the servant class's religious belief that they have a duty to serve others. Exploiting materialists often practice some popular form of public religion even while their personal behavior in managing their professional affairs shows that they are behaving according to the amoral dictates of Materialism. With a little effort, these materialists can imagine that they are faithful members of whatever denomination of God-fearing believers they grace with their attendance.

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There would seem to be six more or less distinct kinds of materialists, which might be described as follows:

1. **Philosophically Loquacious Materialists**, as illustrated by the above quotation, explicitly acknowledge the moral freedom that their belief system gives them but seem to be unaware that this implies that they are robots with no more claim to self-respect than a cow.
2. **Capitalists**. Some of these are businessmen whose primary interest is in producing goods and services for their fellow humans and who engage in only a moderate amount of exploitation. At the other extreme are rapacious and completely amoral

financiers whose primary interest, regardless of how they may prate about their concern for economic efficiency, is in gaining personal wealth and power by manipulating other people's money and the ownership of businesses.<sup>3</sup>

3. **Ideological Materialists** are a small group of noncreative scientists who are emotionally devoted to publicly attacking as superstition all evidence of extraphysicality in man.
4. **Compulsively Consistent Scientists** are imbued with the technological triumphs of physics and the social failures of established religion and have strong feelings favoring rationality and against irrationality. This small group includes some eminent scientists whose urge for logical consistency presumably was a factor in driving them to their scientific achievements. Privately, the members of this group are absolute in their rejection of established religion, but publicly they find it expedient to take no stand on this topic. They limit their public criticism to the belittlement of superstition. They prefer to have their position on religion publicly displayed by the Ideological Materialists. Perhaps they consider reticence a necessary price to pay for having been born into an infantile world, just as the rest of us offer no comment on the propriety of imposing the myth of Santa Claus upon very small children.
5. **Indoctrinated Materialists.** These include most scientists and upper-class laymen who, in obedience to the authority of the leaders of science, accept the dictum that there are no experimentally detectable extraphysical phenomena occurring in the physical world even though they themselves have not examined the evidence. Although they disavow any non-physical reality, they do not need consistency in their belief systems. They may, for example, be electrical engineers as well as Presbyterians, or whatever may contribute to their comfort under the circumstances in which they find themselves.

Moreover, their general position is not necessarily illogical. To the extent that they are aware of their inconsistencies, they may justify them by the fact that knowledge is rarely complete and absolute and that inconsistencies are to be expected and allowed. By inference from Stanley Milgram's research,<sup>4</sup> these materialists who blindly follow orders to believe what is inconsistent with their other beliefs constitute the majority of educated people. In my experience the number of people, educated or otherwise, who feel a need for logical consistency among their various compartments of thought is exceedingly small.

6. **Economically Lower-Class Materialists** are mostly religious. They enjoy the fruits of materialism and have no interest in its philosophy

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The basic question of man's existence is: Does man have an extraphysical nature as well as a physical nature? Does he have an existence in a realm of reality interacting with, but separate from, the space-time world of physics? Those leaders who dominate the upper echelons of business never ask this question. Instead, they have assumed that the answer is negative. A negative answer to this question is the foundational belief of Materialism. On the other hand, all major religions of the past have answered this question affirmatively.

Moreover, it has always been assumed by the religiously inclined that certain purported spontaneous phenomena, such as the occasional unexplained knowledge of a distant person's thinking, were manifestations of man's extraphysical nature. When the

American parapsychologist, J.B. Rhine, began his work in 1930, he speculated that, by using the methods of Western science to investigate the anomalous direct brain-to-brain transfer of information, one might be able to prove the dual nature of man i.e., the reality of extraphysicality. This is, indeed, what has happened. By demonstrating the reality of extrasensory perception (ESP) and its nonphysical nature, Rhine's followers have shown the foundational tenet of Materialism to be false and have destroyed the logical basis for upper class ruthlessness.

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The findings of parapsychology have been suppressed and denied as far as possible by the **Ideological Materialists**, but this has not been done consciously to defend the religion of Materialism against heresy. In their minds, consciously at least, the Ideological Materialists classify ESP and all other psychic phenomena as among the innocent superstitions of Economically Lower Class Materialists, and have piously opposed these superstitions as the trappings of religion and the tools of charlatans.

Meanwhile, the occurrence of ESP (along with much associated nonsense) has slowly been accepted by the world at large. Only a small minority of **Indoctrinated Materialists** deny the possibility of ESP, while, ironically, they, as well as most believers in ESP, seem to have no inkling as to its moral implications and transcendent importance.<sup>5</sup> The dominant belief in our culture today (ignoring the **Compulsively Consistent Materialists** and the **Ideological Materialists**) would seem to be that ESP may occur but, if it does, it is a weak, rare, inaccurate, fragmentary effect and of no importance. This is one element of the current vulnerability of the enemies of ESP; for ESP with some psychics is not a trivial phenomenon and it is certainly not without ideological importance.

The other element of the enemies' vulnerability lies in the behavior of the leaders of science. As documented in *Joyride to Infinity*<sup>6</sup> and explained in "The Sovereignty of Science," our scientific leaders refuse to waste time examining the evidence for ESP because they believe ESP is contrary to the consensual wisdom of science. That consensual wisdom, however, is based upon the doctrine of Materialism, which **assumes** that there are no extraphysical phenomena, i.e., there is no ESP. This is circular reasoning for which our scientific leaders should be reproved or ridiculed.

The circularity of this argument depends upon the occurrence of ESP as a nonphysical phenomenon. Does ESP so occur? One cannot know until one competently examines the evidence. Among the leaders of science there are many who are competent to do so. Over the years a handful have done so, only to be laughed at. How much longer will it be until the number of competent scientists publicly accepting ESP becomes large enough to be so embarrassing as to be intolerable? This is an interesting question, in view of the countervailing factors outlined in "The Sovereignty of Science."

Your author believes that, as a religion, Materialism is a colossal fraud. To encourage a public examination of this idea, your author suggests that those who have been convinced by personal experience of the reality of ESP or related phenomena should join with parapsychologists in confronting the leaders of science. They should ask those leaders to personally affirm or defend their belief that the quality of the best-existing journal-published experimental evidence supporting ESP is, or is not, high by the customary standards of psychology.

Please note that your author's proposal is **not** to ask high-level scientists individually to take a stand on the reality of ESP. Instead, what is being proposed is to ask these high-

level scientists to take a stand on the current tacit position of the scientific community that research in the field of parapsychology does not meet the customary standards of research in the field of psychology and therefore parapsychology does not warrant open-minded and vigorous research support. The purpose of this proposal is to bring this question to public discussion.

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**1** How the religion of Materialism was created, how it obligates physics, psychology, and the upper class, and how it is defended today, are set forth in my essay "The Sovereignty of Science." What is not explained in that essay are the moral implications of Materialism. "The Sovereignty of Science," which appears as Chapter 4 of this book, may be found also in *The Journal of Scientific Exploration*. 14(2000), 115-120.

**2** Provine, W. (1988). "Scientists, Face it! Science and Religion Are Incompatible." *The Scientist*. September 5, pp.10-11.

**3** The most dangerous capitalists are the **Global Financiers**, who operate at a national or international level and who seek and use power to manipulate some substantial sector of the economy for their personal aggrandizement and, ultimately, for the further empowerment of their own class without regard for the welfare of the middle and lower classes and without awareness of the contribution those manipulations are making to the ultimate collapse of the world economy.

**4** Milgram, Stanley. (1983). *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*. New York: Harper/Collins. ISBN 0-06-131983-X.

**5** Where does one go from here? If, as parapsychology shows, people relate to one another in some extraphysical way, i.e., if we are not wholly isolated units of life, then it is reasonable to infer that man has a moral obligation to have concern for his fellow men in the cooperative venture of living and that his obligation increases rather than decreases with the increasing intelligence that gives him power over his fellow men. The whole relationship of capitalist to worker will ultimately be modified as we recognize the extraphysical obligations of the capitalist to his workers.

**6** McConnell, R.A. (2000). *Joyride to Infinity: A Scientific Study of the Doomsday Literature*. Chapters 2-8, 13. Washington, DC: Scott-Townsend. ISBN 1-878465-35-X. See also, "<http://www.ramcconnell.com/joyride.htm>".