

HST 203: U.S. History Sp19 (Escobar)

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Environmentalism as Religion
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, May 24, 2019, 5:31 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Environmentalism as Religion topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the parts, pictures, and questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Environmentalism as Religion

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Anna McNutt](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 4:49 PM

I've got to say, my view of this topic changed the more I read about it. I didn't really agree with Mr. Rubins claim or how he made his point. As I kept reading though I understood it more and more. What I was stuck on for a while was my belief that being "green" or eco friendly is good. The idea of bettering our earth is a great concept. However, everything starts as a good IDEA. Everyone being taken care of and getting equal everything, that's a great idea, but that leads to communism.



This picture stood out to me and I began to understand the concern here. Being green is a good idea, but how far will it have to go to be enforced? Already we have has bags taken away from us, and straws. We are given incentive to recycle in the form of money. We are fined if we are caught littering. We are already being forced into green thinking. Although it's not extreme yet, could it get there? Could we actually have green police watching our every move like the commercial depicted? It seems a little crazy and far fetched for a good thing like being eco friendly and trying to help our earth to take control of us. But like I said, even communism starts as a good concept. It's not the idea of environmentalism, like I originally thought, its where that idea could lead.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Robert Whitney](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:27 PM

What we have to remember when comparing communism to environmentalism is intentions. The intention of communism is to create a classless society of equals and seize the major means of productions of a nation. The intention of environmentalism is to save the lives of plants, animals, and humans, while preventing the destruction of our planet. Something we must realize about environmentalism within our society is that the market cannot and will not choose to be eco-friendly. Decades of establishing destructive infrastructure has lead to the unwillingness of corporations to make positive change. This is where the government comes in whether or not we like it. Within the past year, the late Stephen Hawking gave humans 100 years to live until climate changes makes earth uninhabitable. I would argue that the bans on plastics, the recycling, the green thinking, i enforced out of necessity. We as a society have shown that not only can the corporations not make the changes needed, but also us common people. There is a stigma around communism because it has been shown that it kills people, lots of people. The worst possible thing that environmentalism can do is force people to make responsible choices that they otherwise wouldn't have made. Believe me, I do not like big government and high regulations, but I believe that the only way we can really tackle the issue of climate change is by government intervention.

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Scientific Creationism
by [Lily Teague](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 7:21 PM

The claim that stood out the most to me in Mr. Rubins article was, "Scientists are understandably uninterested in religious stories because they do not meet the basic criterion for science: They cannot be tested." (Rubin Article) I do not feel that that is entirely correct. Take Scientific Creationism for example. "Scientific creationism is a branch of creationism that claims to provide scientific support for the Genesis creation narrative in the Book of Genesis and disprove or reexplain the scientific facts." (Scientific Creationism, Wikipedia) Both Scientific Creationism and Environmentalism (Liberty, Equality, Power, pg.978) began to develop in the 1960s.

I do not think that environmentalism has become or is becoming a religion. Firstly, it lacks any rites and tradition. For example, the Catholic Church is rich with tradition, the seven sacraments are a great example of that. They are critical parts of the Catholic Theology that outline different aspects of the church. I think that to say Environmentalism is becoming a religious belief is hyperbolic. He says that there is no prayer, which is true, but that there are self-sacrificing things that Greens can do. Such as recycling, I do not think that prayer and recycling are comparable. I think that that is a very inappropriate comparison because one, religious prayer is sacred and personal, whereas recycling is something one does as a good citizen and steward of the planet.

When looking at the images provided, I think that they were created as both propaganda and learning. For example, the first images about Christian Environmentalism and the Green Bible are meant for learning. I do find it strange that they altered The Bible to make is "green." Whether or not it is correct, I think that people shouldn't necessarily make an edition of The Bible based off of their own interpretation. I think it is great to study and interpret that Bible, but I do think it is important to not publish your own opinion on it as fact.

Secondly, the last image depicting what I think is an Environmentalist march or riot shows a banner that says "SAVE THE PLANET, KILL YOURSELF." This is a great example of propaganda, the point they are trying to make I think is not one to take literally, but what they are trying to say is that human beings are the problem and that by taking us out of the equation the planet has a chance.

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Re: Scientific Creationism
by [Lily Teague](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 8:21 PM

After reading the "Mission Impossible Global Warming" article I was kind of blown away. Mr. Sameulson brings up a lot of good and, for lack of a better word, realistic points. We are observing climate change but what can we do about? One thing that our author points out is that there really is not a lot we can do, and also, the advances we have made are really only making a small change for the better. He feels that the best route to take as a race would be to take drastic steps, and severely tax fossil fuels. Not 10% or 15% taxations, but double or triple the prices to reduce consumption and encourage alternative energy and fuel sources. I can only imagine the outrage if something like that was to be enacted. I'm sure I would be upset at first because wow that is so expensive. However, taking a step back, because even though it is quite a severe action, it might just be necessary in order to save our planet.

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Movement = Religion?

by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 8:21 PM

While reading through Mr. Rubin’s article, I found myself disagreeing with a lot of what he had to say. I do not consider environmentalism a religion in the ways he has described it. To me, a religion involves a God, Goddess, or other supreme beings that followers acknowledge and worship. Environmentalism is more of a way of life, or a movement, in my opinion. He says that environmentalism is “ eerily close to a religious belief system since it includes creation stories and ideas of original sin” (Rubins article). I’m not sure what creation stories and ideas of original sin he is referring to. Perhaps he is referring to the big bang as a creation story? I’m also guessing that when talking about original sin, he could be referring to the industrial revolution, in which humanity began to “sin” by practicing mass production, which in turn produced pollution, harming the earth. But I’m just guessing here. Next, he says that another way environmentalism is becoming more and more religious like is because it “provides its adherents with an identity”. I would have to argue that just because a movement gives people a sense of identity doesn’t make it a religion. For example, political parties can give people a sense of identity, because your political beliefs are really a reflection of what you feel is right and wrong. I wouldn’t say that a person who is a conservative or leans right on the political spectrum is then a follower of the conservative party religious group because, in my understanding of what makes a religion a religion, you would need a belief in a higher power. Rubin does not address what higher power “greens” or environmentalists believe in. He does, however, address that environmentalists have a holy day, holy places, rituals, and food taboos. According to him, environmentalist temples are recycling or trash bins. But if you think about it, wouldn’t just the Earth itself be a temple or holy place, since environmentalists view the Earth as something sacred and worth protecting? I disagree with his points I think entirely, but I think it is because we have different interpretations on what religion is and what it isn’t. I also get the feeling that this article was perhaps written in a comedic or sarcastic tone, and that maybe we shouldn’t be taking all of his words too seriously. At the end of the article, Mr. Rubin informs us that he is skeptical of the environmental movement when he says “ by making the point that Greenism is a religion, perhaps we environmental skeptics can enlist the First Amendment on our side” (Rubin article). I can see why he wants to put forth the argument that the environmental movement is a religion because the first amendment states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion”. If environmentalism was considered a religion, then no environmental laws could be passed, as that would be seen as promoting the “Greens”. As he is a skeptic of environmentalism, it would make sense for him to not want these types of laws passed.

Growing up, I was raised in a Christian family and considered myself a religious person who believed in Jesus Christ and the Bible, up until about middle school, where I began to question my beliefs. While in the process of doubting, I explored Paganism and Wicca, which are very nature-centered religions. As of now, I consider myself an atheist-leaning agnostic, but still, hold with me some themes of Paganism and Wicca. The ideas I carry with me to this day are that we, as humans, are nature. We all came from this Earth and will return to it when we die. In that regard, I see myself as a worshipper of the Earth, as it is the only god that really makes sense to me. I don’t have all the answers, but the Earth is something tangible that I can acknowledge and honor. Saying all that, I feel that my background of belief has impacted my interpretation. My definition of religion and what makes a religion is, of course, different from others and may not be totally right. I’m dismissing his claims because I don’t believe the environmental movement is a religion, rather just a movement. A way of life does not equal religion, in my view. And while there are beliefs in this movement just like religions have beliefs, that doesn’t make them one and the same.

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Re: Movement = Religion?
by [Lily Teague](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 8:08 PM

Yes, I definitely agree with you, Mr. Rubins has compared two things (environmentalism and religion) that are not totally comparable. And I really liked how you put it, how religion involves higher beings and deities that we worship, whereas environmentalism although it can be something that you practice by being environmentally conscious and reducing waste for example, however it does not include the contents of what makes up a religion. For example, I think that religions are often put in place in order to answer humanities everlasting questions, such as, what is the purpose of the universe, how did we get here, why are we here? Each religion attempts to answer these questions and presents their answer. However, I do not think the environmentalism is seeking to answer any of these existential questions. Instead, it presents ways in which humanity can protect and improve the health and well being of the planet.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 8:57 PM

How are the specific parts of Rubin's article accurate or inaccurate in the description of environmentalism as a religion?

Environmentalism as Religion is a fact. Nowadays many people do not define themselves as Christians, Jews or even Muslims. But give themselves a title to their person. " I am green " meaning that it brings its interests to nature See the environment as a God, someone who should be obeyed, or take care I do not context that this is good, because, in this same In other words, we are preserving our humanity, because climatic warming is a real fact affecting our world, but maybe it is or not unconsciously, the adherent ones to the environment, to become part of a religion, because, some, as for example certain person of India, The tree is a resource that provides us with the means to make books, paper, paper and everything else. people in India after using paper, they believe, we need to put in those papers in the recycling bin, Not in the trash and do not throw it around or step on it This is a lack of respect to the God of knowledge that gives you the opportunity to learn Certains even Deprived of certain food, respect the fauna and the flora. Bob Marley was smoking the weed because it was part of his religion, and this area would bring nature to life, and the weed, which comes from the cannabis leaf, is a plant that their god had allowed them to smoke.

I think that Rubin's article describes the term environmentalism as a religion, and it underscores the fact that today, schools, hospitals, political structures, and many others

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Daniel Zavala](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 11:48 PM

While Rubin's article does raise some interesting points about the fervor with which some people pursue environmentalism with. It fails to convince me that environmentalism is a new religion for one simple reason. Environmentalism is a movement, dedicated to a single goal (that goal does have a nasty habit of seeming completely impossible to reach at times I will admit). But religion on the other hand is a belief system, it is a set of rules and moral codes that you organize your life around. I would consider myself somewhat religious but I honestly don't feel as if that fact affects my interpretation of his claims much if at all.

Of the three images (sets) I would have to say the most noteworthy is #3. They all could be said to be parodying the idea that environmentalism is like a religion but the third image is the most aggressive is how blatantly it is parodying the idea. That said, all of these images could also probably be considered derogatory to this religious-environmental connection idea.

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Environmentalism is Not a Religion
by [Amanda Francis](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 6:52 PM

The article by Paul H. Rubin stating that environmentalism is a religion is ridiculous, and the examples he uses are even more absurd. For most, the basis of environmentalism is science and research which contradicts the very essence of religion which is founded on faith. Rubin gives the example, "There are food taboos. Instead of eating fish on Friday, or avoiding pork, Greens now eat organic foods and many are moving towards eating only locally

grown foods.” Catholics choose to not eat fish on Fridays during lent as a sacrifice to Christ. People choose to eat organic not only because of the effects on the environment but because of links to pesticidal consumption and disease. It’s been proven that smoking cigarettes causes cancer, so if someone quits smoking for health reasons, is it considered a religious sacrifice? Another example Rubin gives is “There is no prayer, but there are self-sacrificing rituals that are not particularly useful, such as recycling. Recycling paper to save trees, for example, makes no sense since the effect will be to reduce the number of trees planted in the long run.” Really? Recycling is a “self-sacrificing ritual”? Instead of throwing your paper in the trash, you put it in the recycling bin. It takes the same exact amount of time. Also, if you make “new” paper out of “old” paper, less trees will be planted because less trees are being cut down. It’s not rocket science. Rubin finishes his article with, “By making the point that Greenism is a religion, perhaps we environmental skeptics can enlist the First Amendment on our side.” Essentially, Rubin is trying to make the point that environmentalism is a religion to prevent laws that protect the environment from being since congress cannot make laws “respecting the establishment of religion.”

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Re: Environmentalism is Not a Religion
by [Robert Whitney](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:40 PM

I agree with you 100% and believe what you pointed out about recycling and planting trees was absolutely essential. I think that was a bit of a propaganda statement. Yes, it is true that if you recycle, less trees will be planted, but what he neglects to say is that the trees used to make new paper would still be standing! I also agree with you about his whole plan for the article which would be to classify environmentalism as a religion in order to prevent laws. I think that his whole argument was very reaching because he fits environmentalism into his own version of a religion, but when compared to real definitions of religion, it does not fit. If he were to use true persuasive arguments, I would feel differently about it. He decides to use language that seems as though environmentalism has no real basis for existing and that their reasons are arbitrary.

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Part one: does religion stand a chance?
by [Adam Moore](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 9:41 PM

In Rubin’s article he makes many accurate claims about the way environmentalism is becoming a religion. If we ignore his clear bias against religion, when he breaks down religious behaviors, he does a decent job of highlighting the most stereotypical religious observations. Only one part during his break down do I take serious issue with, and that is when he writes about their belief system. " Belief systems are embraced with no logical basis. For example, environmentalists almost universally believe in the dangers of global warming but also reject the best solution to the problem, which is nuclear power. These two beliefs co-exist based on faith, not reason." (Source: [Wall Street Journal](#) <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304510004575186343555831322.html>). His assumption that those who follow religious teachings do so with only blind faith is miss guided and hurts the article overall. When a person’s views are as jaded as Mr. Rubin’s you must really shed away most of the article to get to the bare bones. I would say that many who practice environmentalism do so with a good knowledge of what is taking place in the world. Some of it may be miss guided but I would not say they are completely ignorant either. So, his characterization of religion is flawed.

My own religious views greatly impact how I take in the information provided to me through this article. I believe he wants to garner an emotional response in many who would read this, and he succeeded. His views are very biased, so you must dig into the information to get anything out of it. I can accept a lot of the generalizations he shares in his article, but his Sinicism gets in the way of many good points he could discuss.

This article has a lot to unpack when you look to see if there are informative or harmful examples of religious-environmentalism connections. When professor Rubin says “Environmentalism is a proselytizing religion. Skeptics are not merely people unconvinced by the evidence: They are treated as evil sinners. I probably would not write this article if I did not have tenure.” (Source: [Wall Street Journal](#) <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304510004575186343555831322.html>). This statement truly speaks to the time we live in, sixteen years ago the radical left would oust those that did not have their views and this sentiment has only grown over the years. So, when he wrote this article, he understood that it would be dissected and contested by many, possibly even colleague.

The most troubling image in part one of this issue would number one for me. I have never seen these works. The bible is the most troubling, I can accept and agree with the image on the left. God wanted us to be good stewards of the earth so we should invest in ways to keep it clean but dedicating a bible to specifically highlight this, is extremely troubling. The Bible makes it clear that God intends for us to take good care of the earth, creating a translation for this sole purpose is misguided and conformist.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 12:04 AM

on the basis of reality and similar historical examples in the history of our nation. How are the specific parts of this article true?
it is a fact. In the article, global warming has an impossible mission
Written in 2018 by Robert J. Samuelson, he says that even if one wants to save humanity, it is an impossible mission. I understand that today, on many machines, the plant is at the base of greenhouse effects. Electric cars, as he might mention in his article. these cars do not solve the case because
Natural gas and coal are the underlying energy sources for much of the electricity. And also, many people prefer to buy gas cars, which are cheaper than these electric cars. And it is not that the state or government can not help or support the idea of protecting nature by supporting the IPCC. I think it's just because The use of greenhouse gases, carbon, coal, and many other things that are harmful to the environment is used daily by the public. I mean, we can not just separate ourselves from it because we have a habit of using it every day, enjoy the benefits instead of looking at the consequences and getting away from it. Every day, thousands of gases are pumped into the oceans of Africa, Libya to create the fuel, for cars and planes. We can not just say we are going to stop the use of planes. Because it will have a decisive impact on the business world. many people will lose their jobs, companies will have to close.
but I think it's not impossible, it's just a problem of time consciousness

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War Time Controls
by [Trenton Hough](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 12:16 PM

The article written by Robert J. Samuelson gives a very brief overview of global warming, and then lists some possible solutions. One of the solutions he talked about was controls by the government like those in times of war. This caught my eye for a few reasons. I believe there is a need for something to change, but you must look at the world we have come to know. People today love how easy their life is. They can do whatever, whenever with the help of great advancements in technology. The technology we use makes our lives very easy. Cars and trucks to get us anywhere in the country, a website that you can order almost anything right to your front door, and a fridge that will do your shopping for you. Letting the government control what types and how much energy you can use will take away some of the luxury's we have in this country. I think that method would work very well, but it would come with a lot of back lash from the general public. As a world population we must find a way to convince others that something needs to be done. I think it starts with the education of our students. We need to teach people that what we are doing is going to end up killing the earth we know. I also believe we should start banning the things we can live without. For example, all the things in the Audi commercial we have cleaner and more efficient replacements. Reusable cups and LED lights are a great start. Samuelson has the right idea, but we must take it one step at a time. Forcing people to change to fast could set us a step back instead of forward.

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Re: War Time Controls
by [Anna McNutt](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 11:03 PM

I agree with your post. As Americans we have a lot of convenience and in comparison to many countries we have it very easy. I also agree that some things need to change about our environmental control. One of the biggest things that bothers me is that garbage ends up in the oceans. And as we have seen recently steps are being taken to stop, or at least ease, that problem. We're seeing more paper straws, and may soon have a ban on plastic straws. We have to pay to get a bag at the grocery store in Eugene. I think these steps could help our problem, however I believe there is a fine line between being beneficial and being too controlling. We are known

as a free country and if we start banning everything and taking a way too much choice for consumers we could lose some freedom. Again, I think that some laws to protect our environment are important and even essential. You're right, we should take it one step at a time because forcing people to do things may not end well. I think educating people about the damage we are doing to the environment is a great step too. If we can make change voluntarily that will go over much better than forcing.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Will Taylor](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 4:53 PM

Part one: I think that for the most part, Rubin draws fair and understandable connections between religion and environmentalism, but some of the "parallels" he drew were a bit of a stretch, such as claiming that recycling bins are the equivalent of sacred structures like temples. I was raised Christian, but in the past few years I've realized that I've become an agnostic atheist. Looking at Rubin's article from the position of a former member of a religion, I can definitely see the parallels in the connections he draws, and his reasoning for it, but overall it is a bit of a stretch, and I don't believe it's fair to call environmentalism a religion. However he never does say that, he says that environmentalism has become something that people have chosen to identify as, just like in religion, and on that point, I agree with him completely. The images are... interesting. There's certainly a wide range of messages coming across from them. The books "An Introduction to Christian Environmentalism" and "The Green Bible" seem like they'd certainly be interesting, but it's hard to say without reading them, but based off the covers I'd say they're probably just written as the author's belief of the way one act as an environmentalist. The pictures don't really say much, one of them literally just says "environmentalism is religion", and the other one gives me more gay pride vibes than environmental crosses. As for the banner, it's just ridiculous radical propaganda.

Part two: I also agree with what Samuelson had to say. I may be a bit more optimistic, but each claim he make in his article I agreed with. I think that most "green" things people do nowadays is almost completely useless. Recycling, eating organic, and not using plastic all can technically help the environment, but in the big picture, their efforts result in little to no improvement in our atmosphere. Personally, I think that on top of introducing a gradual, strict fossil fuel emissions tax, we should also put funding into programs like Tesla, and people like Elon Musk. As well, I think that countries should work to form a league of nations-esk treaty, to work together to better the environment. However, I have a feeling that that's just wishful thinking, at least for the next few decades. My fear is that the people in charge right now, the ones that know they're going to die before it's a big problem, do nothing, and leave it to the next generation, to take care of after it's already too late.

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Environmentalism as Religion
by [Alexander Marx](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 8:21 PM

Paul Rubin makes some interesting parallels between environmentalism and religion. The core of this seems to come from relating modern day religion to the tribalism of the past, touching on the nature of humans desiring inclusiveness. He draws a line highlighting a main difference in that modern day religion is much more accepting than tribalism because outsiders can be accepted into the group relatively easily providing they share certain beliefs with the religion. Being a pretty non-religious person, the main aspect that I think differentiates environmentalism from other religions is the sense of tangibility attached to "practicing" environmentalism. Rubin states in one of his parallels that belief systems are embraced with no logical basis, implying that environmentalism falls under this category. To me there is a big difference between embracing a religious teaching out of faith and acting consciously for the sake of the environment. We all live on this planet and the goal of preserving it should not be compared to, for example, believing in a deity. It is this "preservation" mindset that I think attracts people in a different way than religion, whether they practice a religion or not. It is much easier to have disbelief in something like an intangible higher power than it is to acknowledge the importance of the environment that we live in. Some of his other examples are also problematic to me, such as comparing religious meal traditions like avoiding certain foods on certain days to environmentalists eating locally grown foods. Following a religion's guidelines for fasting or limiting certain foods for spiritual purposes seems very different compared to consciously choosing one's meals based on environmental impact. Finally, the first pair of images we are given helps me solidify the differences between environmentalism and religion. Both images are of books that appear to be about how to apply environmentalism to your life as a Christian, which implies that these environmental practices are separate from the religion. Despite all

of this, I do see where Rubin is coming from in his article and it really comes down to how an individual decides to go about their practice of environmentalism. Different levels of dedication, lifestyle choices and fanaticism can bring it closer or further from a religion, depending on the person.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion, or as a lifestyle?

by [Jessie Shafer](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 10:37 PM

Environmentalism is very much like a religion. In the article by Paul Rubin, where he lists how environmentalism is a religion, is absolutely true. It is a religion. But when I looked at the provided images, I was very confused at first. Some of the images were comparing environmentalism to Communism and nazism. For example, the picture that is half green, half red and reads "GREEN it's the new RED", was very confusing to me. I found myself asking what environmentalism had anything to do with Communism. Then it clicked, that environmentalism really is like Communism. People get very nasty with others if they see them littering, or not recycling. Just disrespectful to the earth. It's almost identical to Communism. But what can we do about it?

Solutions to environmentalism will never come about. If it really is like a religion, then people who practice environmentalism will treat it like a religion. Its just like how Americans reacted to President Kennedy being a Catholic (class notes), and many people refused to accept him as President. Environmentalists will always push their thoughts and opinions onto others, just as any other religious person does.

The images made me think at first that maybe environmentalism was, bad, for a lack of better words. But having an opinion on a matter doesn't make someone bad. The actions do.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion, or as a lifestyle?

by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 3:07 PM

I'm interested in your take on how communism is like environmentalism. Communism, as defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica, is a "political and economic doctrine that aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of at least the major means of production (e.g., mines, mills, and factories) and the natural resources of a society" (Britannica.com). Environmentalism, as defined by the Britannica website, is " a political and ethical movement that seeks to improve and protect the quality of the natural environment through changes to environmentally harmful human activities". I don't agree that environmentalism is identical to communism, rather communism and socialist policies could pave the way for a more environmentally- minded world. In our current capitalist society, our environment is being destroyed because of the endless growth and production that consumers require in this capitalistic framework. We live on a finite planet that has finite resources, and an economic system that requires continuous growth is unsustainable. I'm not an economics major, and I don't know if a communist economic system would fix all our problems. But as someone who believes in aspects of environmentalism, I do think that our economic system would have to change in order for the goals of the environmental movement to come to fruition, so perhaps communism or another system could bring about that change. So again, I don't believe that environmentalism is communism, rather more environmentalist policies could be put into action under a different economic structure like communism. When you say "solutions to environmentalism will never come about", I agree with you, but only within the framework of our current political and economic situation. Under different circumstances, I believe humanity can figure out how to live in harmony with the planet like our ancestors did, even if we don't live in harmony with each other.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by [Dago Franck-Nathan Kouassi](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 10:44 AM



Given the images above, why do they exist? As truths, as lies, as propaganda? Are they useful and informative or harmful?

I think this picture exist as propaganda. My first thought when I saw this picture, was " that's going to fare " after some questions came to mind. why this picture? why is it mark "save planet kill yourself"? This image draws my attention to how the environmentalist considers very seriously the planets. But do they think that trees, or animals, are better than human beings? that puzzles me. But once again after research, I discovered that it was a protest in 1990 by a church called Euthanasia, which was trying to draw people's attention to the dangers of the environment, and I think these flags are very effective for, once more, it has attracted my attention, and lead me to understand why this flag, and to make inquiries in order to understand this flag. Similarly, these flags began to be replicated in the 1990s in order to sensitize and target the state. does anyone have a thought on this picture?

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 3:18 PM

My thoughts on this picture are that its humorous and also true. If you believe in climate change, humanity's actions have a direct impact on Earth systems that are negative and will produce catastrophic events due to the rising temperature of the planet. In order to "save the planet", we will either need to dramatically change our behavior overnight or completely vanish off the Earth. But at the same time, even if all of humanity dropped dead tonight, our legacy of waste would remain for a while.

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good message

by [Jack Swisher](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 6:06 PM

I think that what Rubin says is accurate. That is probably because I have no background really in religion, besides having a few friends that attended church every Sunday. With that, it is easy to believe what Rubin says, because it all makes sense. Especially, "There is a holy day—Earth Day. There are food taboos. Instead of eating fish on Friday,

or avoiding pork, Greens now eat organic foods and many are moving towards eating only locally grown foods. There is no prayer, but there are self-sacrificing rituals that are not particularly useful, such as recycling. Recycling paper to save trees, for example, makes no sense since the effect will be to reduce the number of trees planted in the long run." These comparisons all look very legit to me, a person with limited religious knowledge. Someone with a religious background will most likely find these comparisons a coincidence, or that the examples do not relate at all. The taboo example is kind of fishy to me, because Rubin is saying that for people's religion they don't eat certain foods, and now they have gone green, to me that is just a personal choice to live a healthier lifestyle. Personally I think these images are used as propaganda, but in a good way. A good way because the creator of the images are trying to get people on board with environmentalism, and help make the planet better. Image number 2 in particular stands out, because of the crosses substituted as windmills. To me, they are used to tell people that saving the planet is related to religion, which corresponds to being a good person, and going to heaven. I also think the first two images are useful and informative, the third one relates to a derogatory message. The last one I think represents the people that think religion is extreme. Some people have the opinion that religious people are crazy, or do extreme things for their religion. "Save the planet, kill yourself."

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Re: good message
by [Daniel Quirk](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:45 PM

I'm in the same boat as you religion-wise. It's kind of hard to respond to this with our kind of background; we don't have much room to talk from the outside. I feel like the comparisons/parallels he used are out of proportion and said in a way to make it as basic as possible (so he can relate them more clear). As you said, the food taboo concept is sort of far-fetched and *barely* passes within reason. Since I do have religious friends who are very serious about their faith, I explained this forum to them and asked them their feelings and thoughts (since you said: "Someone with a religious background will most likely find these comparisons a coincidence, or that the examples do not relate at all"). My friend straight-up said, along the lines of "these ideas are barely even related in the context and shouldn't be compared" and that "it's silly to even think of a connection being there." I respect his opinion but I feel like he's talking as a devoted Christian and didn't like the idea of someone downsizing the 'rules' his faith, which I understand.

I like how you said "...propaganda, but in a good way. A good way because the creator of the images are trying to get people on board with environmentalism." This is a good statement because yes, the end goal is to have everyone on board with saving the earth, but, I feel like the way they're making their 'propaganda' seems like a threat, especially in picture #7. The message comes as hostile and as a warning which personally makes me uncomfortable. I feel like there are better ways to advocate their cause.

Picture #7:



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Is Environmentalism a Religion?
by [Trenton Hough](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 7:04 PM

I have no religious affiliation, but I do have a little bit of knowledge from what I have heard/read over the years. I don't agree or disagree with Paul Rubin; I can see how people are on both sides of the topic. Take earth day for example. Robin claims that earth day is the holy day, like Sundays in Christianity, for this environmental religion. People that agree with him would say yes, this is the day we worship and pay respects for what the earth has given to us and everything it has done for us. While people on the opposing side would say no; earth day is just a day on the [calendar](#) created by senator Gaylord Nelson to bring attention to or home. Either way you look at it, it depends on what you believe in. The other thing he brings up is the self-sacrificing rituals. Robin goes on to explain how there may be no prayer in the Environmental religion, but there are things that take its place. Being forced to choose between trash and recycling when discarding something could be look at as a prayer. Recycling could be looked at as a way to repay the earth for it gave you the object to use and now you are putting it to use again. Coming from a limited background for religion I can see how Rubin's article is very persuasive, but at the same time I can see how people would say this is a rude joke towards other religions.

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What do you think
by [Jack Swisher](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 9:20 PM

Trenton, I agree with what you are saying in terms of having little to no religious affiliation, I am in the same boat. But the more I look at these comparisons, the more flaws I start to think about. "Here are food taboos. Instead of eating fish on Friday, or avoiding pork, Greens now eat organic foods and many are moving towards eating only locally grown foods." This to me doesn't seem like it has many connections to religion, switching to only greens just looks like a healthier food choice. "There is no prayer, but there are self-sacrificing rituals that are not particularly useful, such as recycling. Recycling paper to save trees, for example, makes no sense since the effect will be to reduce the number of trees planted in the long run." With my little religious background, praying to me seems like people talking about what they are thankful for, asking for guidance and protection. Recycling is much different, "Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new materials and objects. It is an alternative to "conventional" waste disposal that can save material and help lower greenhouse gas emissions." I don't really see any comparisons. What I mean by no comparisons is that turning something used into something new isn't related to thanking god for your family.

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Re: What do you think
by [Kate Adkisson](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 3:28 PM

I agree with you Jack when you say that the comparisons are flawed. The argument of food taboos is flawed to me as well, as we don't label vegetarianism or veganism religions, rather we consider them lifestyles or movements, even if there are some fanatics. I don't agree with Rubin's argument that environmentalism is a religion, as I have stated in my other posts on this forum, rather it's a movement that comes along with certain lifestyle choices. A lifestyle choice within the movement you mentioned was recycling. I don't see recycling as a ritual, rather a choice you can make. A ritual is a ceremony while recycling to me is just something you do or don't do, and you don't even have to be a part of the environmental movement to do it. But in terms of religion, a ritual that you would probably need to be a part of that religion to do would be taking communion at church. It's an intentional ceremony reserved for followers of that faith. Practices like being vegetarian or recycling don't necessarily mean you need to consider yourself a "follower" of the environmental movement.

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Environmentalism is not a Religion
by [Robert Whitney](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 10:27 AM

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines religion as "worship or service to God or the supernatural". Throughout the article, Rubin describes environmentalism and places it under categories that constitute a religion. However, using the dictionary definition of religion, we cannot place environmentalism in the category of religion. Environmentalists do not serve a God or the supernatural, they just respect and advocate for nature on the planet Earth. I would agree with Rubin that the rituals he mentioned have some truth, but the meanings behind them are not for a God or the supernatural. It seems to me that this article is trying to label environmentalism as a religion, so that under the First

Amendment, the government would not be allowed to teach this in schools. The picture of the windmill/cross feels like propaganda. There is little connection between environmentalism and Christianity. There is however a connection between environmentalism and Republicanism in the way that Republicans are generally skeptical of the necessity of environmentalism. According to Pew Research Center, Republicans beat out Democrats (who are generally on the side of environmentalism) in the following categories: frequency of prayer, [attendance](#) at religious services, and belief in God. I see no correlation between environmentalism and religion, and certainly not Christianity and environmentalism.

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Mother Earth
by [Cristian Alamo](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 5:50 PM

I think Professor Rubin makes a valid argument in his claim that worshiping the environment as a religion. Recycling is a daily ritual much like prayer and Earth day can be considered a holy day. However the recycling bins as sacred structures, I do not buy. We do not protect recycling bins like a stained glass window in a church or an alter for a god. If environmentalism wants to make greater strides to become a religion, I believe it must be more structured and have more set (and obvious) rituals. Image #1 however is probably the best argument for environmentalism to be religion. It could be considered on a branch of Christianity because the bible has been interpretive by many groups of people and I see no reason that environmentalism could be a form of worshiping god. Taking care of the planet, recycling and celebrating Earth day as a holy day could be all considered Christian rituals. Those books could be used as evidence to the government why they are infringing on their right to practicing their religion and how the government needs to take actions to protect our planet.

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Maybe its just me but...
by [David Galbreath](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:21 AM

I think this article of Mr. Rubin's is very defensive. these are weak claims he is making with very little source attribution.

- There are no temples, but there are sacred structures. As I walk around the Emory campus, I am continually confronted with recycling bins, and instead of one trash can I am faced with several for different sorts of trash. Universities are centers of the environmental religion, and such structures are increasingly common. While people have worshipped many things, we may be the first to build shrines to garbage.

This paragraph in particular just strikes me as laughable. "shrines to garbage? come on. He's talking about recycling bins here. I can entertain his thought though and see that he is making a point that recyclable or not its still waste. in this point, i am entirely on his side. China no longer accepts importing recyclable material and now we are just pilling it up. Here's an NPR article that expounds on that. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/06/28/623972937/china-has-refused-to-recycle-the-vests-plastics-what-now>

I just don't buy into the whole "environmentalism is also a religion" thing. I've seen the comparison before and really you can make the same connections between sports and religion. The Super Bowl can be the Holy Day, the extreme fans practice "self-sacrificing" rituals with there lucky superstitions and people are die-hard fans of teams with no logical basis. I guess Football is a religion too now.

I agree with every word of the Samuelson article, he articulates what I have been trying to think. "Democracies — or, for that matter, dictatorships — have a difficult time inflicting present political pain for future, hypothetical societal gains." I love his quote, I think it sums the whole idea up. we can mostly all agree that taking care of the planet should be on the priority list, but we differ in how important we think it is.

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Re: Maybe its just me but...
by [Anna McNutt](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:19 PM

I really appreciated your comparison of Football. I think you're very right, so many things can be compared to religion. By Rubin making the comparison of environmentalism to religion, it makes it look very extreme. I think that a lot of his points are relate able and it was smart of him to use such an extreme comparison to change peoples way of looking at "being green." The thing that bothers me about his claim is that it makes religion look bad. I'm not a very religious person but it still bothers me. He is saying that environmentalism is too loud, or controlled, which implies these ideas to religion. He even says "Belief systems are embraced with no logical basis." Basically saying that religious people blindly follow a belief system without logic. Not only is he insulting environmentalists, he is also insulting religion. That seems like a pretty big part of your audience to piss off.

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Re: Maybe its just me but...
by [David Galbreath](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:47 PM

one hundred percent on the same page as you. It was a bold move by him. It feels like e uses religion, in this context, to prove a political point. By doing so, he seems to unintentionally throw jabs at people who practice varying faiths, but - as someone who identifies as an Atheist - he also made it feel like an attack against those who choose not to follow a god. not very effective for his point and outcasted many of his readers. It was a bold choice to publish this piece in the Wall Street Journal but he even stated he was hesitant, at least he was being honest to his own thoughts.

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Is It Justified?
by [Zach Edmiston](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 4:56 PM

Samuelson takes a pretty pessimistic view of the world and us as a society, and our inability to change and implement a lasting difference for our planet. He describes our situation as critical, and that if change is not immediately made it would be catastrophic for the planet and our environment. He makes some very far fetched points, such as “Unless we make dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, warns the IPCC, we face a future of rapidly rising temperatures that will destroy virtually all the world’s coral reefs, intensify droughts and raise sea levels. We need to take action immediately, if not sooner.” that make it sound as if doomsday is right around the corner, and there is little to no hope at this point; to making some very logical and sound points such as “First, we don’t have the technologies to reduce and eventually eliminate emissions from fossil fuels. Yes, solar and wind power have made advances, but they still provide only a tiny share of the world’s total energy, about 4 percent. Electric vehicles don’t solve the problem, because natural gas and coal are the underlying energy sources for much of the electricity.” I also think that these problems don't necessarily have definitive solutions, and there is no one right or wrong answer through government or otherwise. When we come to the question of voluntarily or forcefully, I think there needs to be a line drawn, which is nearly impossible to do in reality. I think it is justified to think that large companies that are blatantly causing as many emissions as possible could be reprimanded with a tax of some sort, though never arrest or judicial punishment. On the flip side, no one should be reprimanded for choosing not to recycle.

The images help develop the problem considering environmentalism in the sense that it shows that there are radicals on each side of the spectrum, which plays well into the points about people taking almost religious qualities to their environmental beliefs. Image #3 is an example of what I believe is a pretty radical side of the spectrum, and the idea of people making signs like that for the purpose of trying to indoctrinate others is a bit concerning for me. Images such as image #8 do evoke a bit of doubt into a person’s mind about if these studies are biased in some form of way and influenced with money to make the general population try to think one way or the other on the topic.

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Environmentalism and Religion
by [Anthony Nguyen](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 7:12 PM

To me the whole idea of environmentalism as a religion is ridiculous. I believe for the most part Rubins article is inaccurate. Rubin states "There is no prayer, but there are self-sacrificing rituals that are not particularly useful, such as recycling. Recycling paper to save trees, for example, makes no sense since the effect will be to reduce the number of trees planted in the long run." Never have I heard of someone who denies the positive impact of recycling, even if the amount of trees planted will not increase, recycling will reduce the amount of trees cut down which would at the very least make it even out. I can see how environmentalism could be compared to religion in a way that maybe someone is very passionate about or spends a lot of time practicing environmentalism. However I also disagree with the idea of environmentalism as religion because while environmentalism is based off of science, a religion is based off of faith. As far as image number three, I believe the message is trying to show us how much damage we have done to our planet by stating that one way to fix it is to kill yourself. To me this is an ineffective way of trying to communicate their message, though I understand it, it makes the issue feel hostile and does not make people want to join their cause.

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Environmentalism described.. is a Religion
by [Tiffanie Chapman](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 9:50 PM

The way Professor Rubin describes Environmentalism as a religion is something I've never even thought to compare it with. Recycling has been something I've always had to do. I've never thought twice about it. The three R's- Reduce, Re-use, Recycle have been hung up and plastered around my school, my home and my town my whole life. When I read Rubin's article I began to think his description was pretty accurate. Now, before I go into why I think he is accurate in the description, I want to say that I don't agree or disagree with his statements. While even after reading his article, I (and many other people) will still continue to recycle. I think we are thrown all types of information about all kinds of findings on global warming and the earth being in trouble that I sometimes don't know what to believe. Going back to Rubin's article, I would say having background information on how Religions practice their beliefs helps a lot with understanding his main arguments. Without having a general idea of how religion works, this article is easily lost in translation. His comparisons are what steered me into the direction of agreement. The holy day, the self-sacrificing rituals (in comparison to maybe fasting), food taboos and sacred structures to temples, are comparable to most religious practice.

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Re: Global Warming: Mission Impossible
by [Daniel Quirk](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:01 PM

A lot of what is said in Samuelson's article is pretty accurate, ESPECIALLY reason #2. Not having the political will to save the environment has been an issue and it does not seem to be getting any better. In the comment section from the youtube video *The Green Police*, a lot of people were saying things like "green nazis" and calling it "green dictatorship." As ruthless as they sound, they're not far from the truth. It's literally taking their own views and forcing them on others, as seen in Agenda 21. The more I think about the commercial and how belief-based it is the more I understand how it makes people upset. No one can force any kind of religion on someone else (since it's mostly personal faith) and as Paul Ruben said (author of the first Wall Street Journal article posted), it has all requirements a typical religion does.

Personally, I don't think conflicting opinions will ever be resolved through any means. It's exactly the same as any other religion, people have their own beliefs and values and adopting new beliefs and values is not an option. Of course, I can't say, for example, there will never be any kind of legislation that restricts or limits, but there definitely will always be opposing views on this matter. Also, if anything was done to aid environmentalism and actually be enforced it'd have to be the main premise of society like it looked in the Green Police video.

There was a funny comment on the youtube video that said something along the lines of "they're all watermelons, green on the outside and red in the middle." This is basically saying the same exact thing as the picture "GREEN: It's the new RED!" That is a super funny and even accurate analogy since it's taking a shot at the movement and basically saying how it's becoming a bit extreme in the wrong direction. After taking a *gander* at these pictures (especially the green nazi photo #10 and recycled communism #7) I actually stopped and took about 4 minutes decoding every single detail in the photo to see what it represents. Before understanding the meaning and intensity of the pictures I was pro-environmentalism and always did my part in reducing and reusing and blah blah, but I never thought about the extremities that might come from it. I will continue to do my part and all, but not be so negative to others who don't have the same opinions and belief as I do.

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Paul Rubin: Is Environmentalism a Religion?

by [Eli Free](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 10:28 PM

"Belief systems are embraced with no logical basis. For example, environmentalists almost universally believe in the dangers of global warming but also reject the best solution to the problem, which is nuclear power. These two beliefs co-exist based on faith, not reason," (Excerpt from Paul Rubin article) this quote perfectly describes the parallelism between religion and environmentalism. In religion, many are refusing to accept any problematic fallacies with their beliefs. For example, most Christian people will discredit any arguments brought upon by, say, someone who practices Buddhism and vice versa. The argument Rubin touches on from an environmentalist standpoint is the fact that they are only ever willing to point fingers and look at what is bad and never a logical solution. In my mind, there are so many commonalities between the two. Another one Rubin brings up is "There are food taboos. Instead of eating fish on Friday, or avoiding pork, Greens now eat organic foods and many are moving towards eating only locally grown food," (yet another excerpt from Paul Rubin's article) this quote is a little less powerful in terms of how hand in hand it goes with religion, but still is a valid point. People are changing the way the eat because of something they believe in. No health issues, nobody forcing them to do so, purely on their own because of certain beliefs they have towards a certain bevy of values. In my mind, they two go hand in hand and environmentalism is no doubt becoming and obscure religion.

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Earth Day is not holy

by [Nicolette D Erazo](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:31 PM

"Religion is a cultural system of designated behaviors, practices, morals, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, spiritual places" (Wikipedia Religion). This idea of environmentalism being a religion is very interesting but hard for me to understand. Rubin states,"There is a holy day- Earth Day" but to view this day as holy doesn't seem completely correct... days that are viewed as holy in religious tradition seem to get some type of wide recognition or a certain level of respect, such as closing schools and post offices. I don't believe that this really occurs on Earth Day and so making this connection seems unrealistic.

As far as the images from #1 go, I believe that they are used as propaganda to try to connect a current issue of needing so save the planet, with something that already exists for many:a sense of religion and Christianity, trying to relate to that audience to get the readers/viewers to get involved because their faith potentially supports what needs to be done on a global scale. This seems like a twisted manipulation because the connection between these to topics: religion and environmentalism does not seem easy to follow on its own without the mapping of Rubin.

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Part 2 of Environmentalism as Religion

by [Tiffanie Chapman](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:37 PM

When asked the question, if solutions will be enacted peacefully/voluntarily, or will in end up being done coercively/punitively? I think we can already answer that question instead of guessing. We are seeing it now recently with plastic bags and plastic straws. Restrictions on plastic straws wasn't something that we had a choice about. I don't remember that being on any recent ballots but, I think it has come to the point where solutions are going to be forced upon us. It is hard to agree or disagree with solutions being forced though. The #8 cartoon with Obama is what stuck out to me because it has a little truth to it, no matter what president is in office, they are funding the research, which creates a bias towards whatever political stand that current president has on global warming. It's hard to believe what information is being presented, whether it is for it or against it, when the President is filling the researchers pockets with money.

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