Religion, Communism, and Science as Conceptual Systems

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The role of conceptual systems in controlling society

• People seek to control society by inventing ideas which are then enforced by institutions

• Religion was an early means of social control

• Saying that rules of behavior come from God gives them more authority
Catholic Church and Com. Party

- God
- Jesus Christ
- Pope
- Vatican
- College of Cardinals
- Priests
- Bible
- Marx & Engels
- V.I. Lenin
- Gen. Sec. Of CP
- Kremlin
- Supreme Soviet
- Members of CP
- Das Kapital, etc.
Catholic Church and Com. Party

- Adherence to Doctrine
- Excommunication
- Spread the faith
- Loyalty to Com. Party
- Exile in Siberia
- Spread Communism
What ideas are included?

• The beliefs in a religion depend on the circumstances at the time the religion was created

• In Protestantism a priest is not necessary as a mediator between God and man because Protestantism was created at a time when people were disillusioned with corruption in the Catholic Church
What ideas are included?

• Christianity arose within a well-established state, the Roman Empire.
• Islam arose in a region and a time when governments were not well-organized. Hence, Islam includes beliefs about appropriate government as well as beliefs about spirituality and individual behavior.
Religion vs. Science

- Source of authority is God
- To reject the will of God risks eternal damnation

- Source of authority is experiment and the judgment of peers
- Rejecting scientific norms risks rejection by the scientific community
Religion vs. Science

• Religious doctrine can be changed only by the Pope or the College of Cardinals

• Scientific theories can be changed by individuals whose ideas are accepted
How science and democracy are different from religion

• In religions differences of opinion are resolved by those in authority

• In science differences of opinion are resolved by conducting experiments

• In democracy differences of opinion are resolved by voting
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