# 3.8 Socialist Thinkers: Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

**Answer ALL questions. For levels-marked questions, write full sentences and develop a clear line of argument using accurate political knowledge and named thinkers. Allow about 15 minutes for this pack.**

**1** Define 'historical materialism' as Karl Marx presents it in his analysis of social development.

**(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)**

**2** State the year in which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published the Communist Manifesto, the pamphlet outlining key Marxist claims about class and revolution.

**(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)**

**3** Explain, in the context of Marx's theory, what is meant by the term 'class struggle'.

**(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)**

**4** Explain Marx's idea of 'alienation' for industrial workers under capitalism, giving two distinct aspects of alienation.

**(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)**


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**5** Explain Rosa Luxemburg's critique of Leninist vanguardism and centralised party control, identifying at least two specific objections she raised.

**(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)**

**6** Explain Rosa Luxemburg's core critique of 'reformist revisionism' as a route to socialism, naming the context in which she developed the critique.

**(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)**


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# Mark scheme · 3.8 Socialist Thinkers: Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg: Test Pack

## Question 1

a concise definition that society's material economic conditions and modes of production determine social institutions, politics and ideas **B1**

**Answer: Society's material economic conditions and modes of production determine its social institutions, politics and ideas.**

## Question 2

1848 cao **B1**

**Answer: 1848**

## Question 3

identifies that class struggle is the ongoing conflict between social classes with opposing economic interests, notably bourgeoisie and proletariat **B1**

explains that this struggle drives historical change and can lead to revolutionary transformation of the mode of production **B1**

**Answer: Class struggle is the conflict between classes with opposing economic interests, especially the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which Marx sees as the motor of historical change and a potential cause of revolutionary transformation of society.**

## Question 4

identifies one aspect, e.g. alienation from the product of labour because workers do not own what they make **B1**

identifies a second aspect, e.g. alienation from the labour process because work is controlled and fractured by capitalist production **B1**

identifies a third aspect or development, e.g. alienation from other people or from species-essence as creative human activity is stifled **B1**

**Answer: Workers are alienated from the product of their labour because they do not own what they produce, and alienated from the labour process because work is controlled, repetitive and not a free expression of human creativity; this can also produce alienation from others and from human 'species-essence'.**

## Question 5

identifies one objection, e.g. Luxemburg argued that a tightly centralised vanguard risks substituting party rule for proletarian self-emancipation **B1**

develops this point, e.g. she believed this undermined genuine mass democracy and spontaneity **B1**

identifies a second objection, e.g. Luxemburg criticised rigid party discipline for stifling independent worker initiative and debate **B1**

develops this point, e.g. she argued that socialism requires active participation and cannot be imposed from above **B1**

identifies a further nuance, e.g. she warned centralisation can lead to authoritarian outcomes and bureaucratic ossification **B1**

develops nuance with brief example or implication, e.g. the risk that the party becomes an elite detached from workers **B1**

**Answer: Luxemburg argued that Leninist vanguardism risked replacing proletarian self-emancipation with party rule, undermining mass democracy and spontaneity; she criticised rigid centralised discipline for stifling worker initiative and debate, and warned that excessive centralisation can produce bureaucratic, authoritarian outcomes in which a party elite becomes detached from the working class.**

## Question 6

identifies that Luxemburg criticised reformists for assuming socialism could be achieved purely by gradual parliamentary reforms **B1**

identifies context: developed in debates in the German Social Democratic movement and her 1900s writings including The Mass Strike and polemics against Bernstein **B1**

explains Luxemburg's argument that reforms under capitalism cannot eliminate the exploitative structures and that mass revolutionary action is needed **B1**

explains Luxemburg's further point that focusing on reforms risks demobilising the working class and weakening spontaneous mass activity **B1**

**Answer: Luxemburg argued that reformist revisionism wrongly assumed socialism could be achieved simply through gradual parliamentary reforms; in debates within the German Social Democratic movement and in writings such as The Mass Strike she maintained reforms cannot abolish capitalist exploitation and that over-reliance on reforms risks demobilising workers, whereas mass spontaneous action is required for revolutionary change.**


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