4.8 Anarchist Thinkers: Mikhail Bakunin and Emma Goldman

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 50 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For levels-marked questions write well-structured developed responses using accurate knowledge of Bakunin and Goldman. Spend about 75 minutes in total; write full sentences for questions worth 6 marks or more.

1 Identify one decade in which Mikhail Bakunin was active in European revolutionary movements.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State two features of Mikhail Bakunin's collectivist anarchism in the context of nineteenth century revolutionary thought.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 State two ways Emma Goldman extended anarchist critique beyond the state to other social institutions.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Explain how Bakunin's preference for immediate insurrection contrasts with gradualist or parliamentary routes to change, using one implied consequence for post-revolutionary social organisation.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

5 Explain Emma Goldman's critique of organised religion in the context of her anarcho-communist thought.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 Analyse two reasons why Bakunin distrusted Marxist revolutionary strategy, focusing on his arguments about power and organisation within post-revolutionary society.

(Total for Question 6 is 10 marks)

7 Evaluate the extent to which Mikhail Bakunin and Emma Goldman agree on how revolution should occur.

(Total for Question 7 is 24 marks)

Mark scheme · 4.8 Anarchist Thinkers: Mikhail Bakunin and Emma Goldman

Question 1

any one of the 1840s, 1860s or 1870s (e.g. the 1848-49 revolutions; the First International, 1868-72), oe **B1**

Answer: The 1860s or 1870s (accept the 1840s): the First International and the split with Marx, or the 1848-49 revolutions.

Question 2

one correct feature, eg emphasis on collective ownership of means of production **B1**

a second correct feature, eg immediate abolition of state and capitalism via revolutionary action **B1**

Answer: Any two of: collective ownership of the means of production; immediate revolutionary destruction of the state and capitalism; organisation through federations of voluntary associations; distrust of hierarchical political parties and centralised authority.

Question 3

one accurate way, eg criticising organised religion as an instrument of social control **B1**

a second accurate way, eg attacking patriarchal family structures and restrictions on sexual freedom **B1**

Answer: Any two of: criticising organised religion as a tool of control and repression; opposing patriarchal family structures that limit women's autonomy; defending free speech and personal sexual freedom; campaigning for birth control and reproductive rights.

Question 4

Level 1 Limited explanation that notes immediate insurrection is direct revolution without linking to consequences. **1-2**

Level 2 Clear explanation of contrast and one implied consequence, eg weaker institutional continuity or risk of disorder. **3-4**

Level 3 Detailed explanation showing how immediate insurrection alters the formation of post-revolutionary institutions, for example enabling direct worker self-management but risking instability if federations are not established. **5-6**

Indicative content:

- Immediate insurrection aims to dismantle state and capitalist institutions at once, enabling direct worker control and spontaneous federations, whereas gradualist or parliamentary routes rely on legal reforms, elections or transitional institutions.
- Consequence: immediate insurrection can empower local self-organisation and prevent entrenchment of a bureaucratic transitional state, but it may also produce short-term instability and challenges in coordinating complex economic systems without pre-existing federations.
- Analytical nuance: a balanced answer might argue that the success of immediate insurrection depends on the level of pre-revolutionary organisation and the ability to create federative structures rapidly, whereas gradualism offers continuity but risks institutional capture by elites.

Question 5

identifies that Goldman saw organised religion as reinforcing obedience and moral conformity **B1**

explains link to power, eg religion legitimises hierarchy including gender and class hierarchies **B1**

links to anarcho-communist aim, eg undermining religious authority was part of freeing individuals for voluntary cooperative life **B1**

Answer: Goldman criticised organised religion for promoting obedience, moral conformity and acceptance of authority, arguing it legitimised social and gender hierarchies; undermining religious authority was therefore integral to freeing individuals from imposed morals and enabling voluntary, cooperative social relations consistent with anarcho-communist ideals.

Question 6

Level 1 Basic identification of one or two reasons with limited development, eg stating Bakunin opposed party centralism without explanation. **1-3**

Level 2 Clear explanation of two reasons with some development, linking Bakunin's concerns about the concentration of power to likely outcomes, but lacking deeper analysis or contextual evidence. **4-6**

Level 3 Detailed analysis of two reasons, explicitly linking Bakunin's distrust to mechanisms by which Marxist strategy might produce a new ruling class, and considering historical or theoretical context to support the analysis. **7-10**

Indicative content:

- Reason 1: Fear of centralised party power. Bakunin argued that Marx's advocacy of a proletarian party seizing state power would create a centralised authority; party elites would monopolise decision making and coercive instruments, reproducing hierarchy rather than abolishing it.
- Reason 2: Transitional state would ossify into tyranny. Bakunin believed any temporary dictatorship would tend to become permanent because those in power resist surrendering it; he saw the proposed transitional period as a practical route to a new form of oppression.
- Mechanism linking reasons: centralised organisations require bureaucracy and command structures that favour leaders over rank-and-file, producing a new ruling class bound to defend its privileges.
- Contextual point: Bakunin observed tendencies in 19th century revolutionary movements where revolutionary committees or leaderships became detached from mass movements, informing his scepticism of party-led transitions.
- Analytical nuance: a strong answer notes Bakunin did not merely attack ends but argued Marxist means would corrupt ends, and might evaluate the force of his claim by reference to later historical examples or to the plausibility of popular self-organisation instead of party seizure.

Question 7

Level 1 Basic knowledge of Bakunin and Goldman with limited or very general evaluation. Claims are asserted rather than supported with developed analysis or examples. **1-6**

Level 2 Clear knowledge of both thinkers and some developed analysis comparing their views on revolution. Evaluation is present but may be one-sided or not fully substantiated with contextual detail. **7-12**

Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge used to compare Bakunin and Goldman's views on revolutionary method, with sustained analysis and engagement with similarities and differences and supported by relevant examples or reasoned argument. **13-18**

Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging and well-supported evaluation that directly addresses the extent of agreement. The response integrates precise knowledge of both thinkers, explores theoretical and practical implications, weighs evidence and counter-arguments, and reaches a clearly justified, balanced judgement. **19-24**

Indicative content:

- Areas of strong agreement: both reject gradualist parliamentary routes for delivering genuine freedom if those routes leave intact hierarchical state structures; both emphasise direct action and the need to dismantle the state and capitalist institutions rather than trusting a transitional political elite.
- Bakunin's position: advocates immediate revolutionary destruction of the state and capitalism, collective ownership organised through federations, and clear distrust of centralised party-led transitions; he focused on the mechanics of revolutionary organisation to prevent a new ruling class.
- Goldman's position: endorses social revolution and direct action, but places additional emphasis on cultural and personal liberation, including gender and sexual freedom, arguing revolution must transform social relations as well as economic structures; she stresses the importance of individual autonomy within communal arrangements.
- Areas of difference: Bakunin's writings centre on organisational structures at the point of revolution and on economic collectivism, whereas Goldman gives greater attention to ongoing cultural change, public education, and challenging social institutions like religion and family as part of revolutionary practice.
- Evaluative points: agreement is substantial on the rejection of Marxist transitional dictatorship and on reliance on popular action rather than party domination, but they differ on emphasis and tactics regarding cultural transformation and the role of individual autonomy within post-revolutionary society.
- Consideration of effectiveness: a strong answer might assess whether their shared advocacy of immediate popular action is realistic or whether Goldman's cultural programme requires a longer process, and whether Bakunin's stricter organisational prescriptions risk becoming rigid in practice.
- Judgement: a balanced conclusion could argue Bakunin and Goldman broadly agree on the core principle that revolution must be direct and must abolish the state, but they diverge meaningfully in emphasis and practical priorities, so the extent of agreement is large in principle but qualified in practice.