4.4 Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives on Religion as Ideology: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For the 6-mark and 12-mark questions write your answers in full sentences and support points with sociological examples where possible. Time guidance: 10 minutes for this pack.

1 Describe one historical example of liberation theology in Latin America and explain briefly how it challenges a Marxist claim that religion only supports ruling-class interests.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Explain one reason Marxist theory finds it difficult to account for the persistence of religion in state-socialist countries that aimed to remove class exploitation.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.4 Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives on Religion as Ideology: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a real example, e.g. Catholic priests and base communities promoting liberation theology, such as Camara or Romero in El Salvador	**B1**
development, e.g. these figures supported poor communities, opposed oppressive regimes and sometimes aligned with social movements	**B1**
explains how this challenges Marxism, e.g. religion here motivates resistance rather than passive acceptance	**B1**
further development, e.g. shows religion can promote social change and solidarity with the exploited, not just ruling-class ideology	**B1**

Answer: An example is liberation theology in Latin America where priests and base communities, for example priests inspired by Camara or Archbishop Romero, supported poor communities and opposed oppressive regimes; this challenges Marxism by showing religion can motivate resistance and promote social change rather than simply reinforcing ruling-class interests.

Question 2

identifies that religion persisted in some state-socialist societies despite official attempts to eradicate it	**B1**
development, e.g. persistence suggests religion can meet non-class needs such as community, identity or spiritual comfort	**B1**
links to Marxist difficulty, e.g. if religion exists without capitalist class structures, Marxist economic explanation seems incomplete	**B1**
further development, e.g. this requires Marxists to explain other social functions of religion or adapt their account	**B1**

Answer: Religion persisted in some state-socialist societies despite official suppression, suggesting it meets non-class needs such as community, identity or spiritual comfort; this challenges a straightforward Marxist economic explanation and requires Marxists to account for additional social functions of religion.

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