

On Authority

Questions for Guided Study and Curricula

I. Basic Concepts

1. How does Engels define authority in this text?
2. What is Engels' basic criticism of anti-authoritarianism?
3. Explain the relationship between authority and subordination as presented in the text.

II. Industrial Examples

1. Describe Engels' cotton mill example and its implications for authority.
2. What specific points does Engels make about authority in railway operations?
3. How does the ship example demonstrate the necessity of authority?

III. Technological and Social Development

1. How does Engels connect technological progress to the question of authority?
2. Explain Engels' argument about the relationship between combined action and organization.

IV. Political Theory

1. How does Engels differentiate between political and administrative authority?
2. What is Engels' critique of the immediate abolition of the state?
3. Explain Engels' view on authority in revolutionary situations.

V. Dialectical Analysis

1. How does Engels apply dialectics to the question of authority versus autonomy?
2. Explain Engels' argument about the relative nature of authority and autonomy.

VI. Practical Implications

1. What practical contradictions does Engels identify in anti-authoritarian positions?
2. How does Engels address the distinction between delegation and authority?

VII. Historical Context

1. How does Engels use the Paris Commune to support his argument on authority?
2. What contemporary (and historical) socialist positions is Engels arguing against?

VIII. Contemporary Relevance

1. How might Engels' arguments apply to modern workplace organization, the organization of revolutionaries, and the building of the Party?