

POL321 (Modern Political Thought: Progress Through History)
Tyranny in the World of Marx and Mill: A Comparative Analysis

By Filip Zaleski; 1008241500

2024.04.02

Chicago NB 17

Ins.: Rebecca Kingston

T.A.: Stefan MacLeod

“Compare and contrast Marx of the Eighteenth Brumaire and Mill on emerging tyranny in the modern era.”

Contents

Introduction.....	3
I. Underlying Philosophies	3
II. The Emergence of Tyranny	6
III. Preventing Tyranny: The Ideal State.....	12
Conclusion	15
A Note on Improvement from PRO	16
Bibliography	17

Introduction

John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx are amongst the most influential political thinkers of modern Western civilization. Mill's promotion of individual rights – from free expression to electoral reform – as well as his analyses of societal norms have paved the way for the liberal principles at the root of modern democracy. Karl Marx's work – most notoriously the Communist Manifesto – has not only sparked waves of political change that still today have their effects on political economies worldwide, but it has also given birth to a critique of our modern capitalist context and has thus generated ever-present scrutiny about our circumstances. Though the two thinkers differ in both their approach to political theory and their normative suggestions about the goals of society, putting their philosophies into close interplay as I seek to do in this essay can help understand both perspectives and evaluate both thinkers' solutions to the question of state and society.

Mill views right and wrong through the prism of utility and welfare, basing his philosophy on the safeguarding of individual liberties. Marx on the other hand uses economic relationships between capital and production to evaluate a society's advancement on a linear path of evolution. Thus, I submit that Mill is principally concerned with a tyranny of curtailed liberty because he sees truth as an unknown that needs to be discovered, while Marx is concerned with a materialist tyranny and its implications of hegemonic control of the means of production by an elite bourgeoisie, because this system prevents the attainment of the one and only fixed truth of class dynamics. I first outline crucial theoretical backdrops for both thinkers to illustrate the fundamental differences in their approaches and assumptions. Then, I speak to exactly how tyrannical societies arise for both thinkers, that is, to the processes and features of history and society that enable tyrannical regimes to form. Finally, I scrutinize how the attainment of "good" societies according to both philosophies can prevent tyranny, before coming to an evaluative conclusion.

I. Underlying Philosophies

Understanding Mill from first principles means understanding the bipartite structure of the theory of utilitarianism. First, a welfarist conception of the good means that the attainment of happiness and the

reduction of suffering are the primary components of the good. Mill does build on the simple concept of individual welfare by including a distinction between higher and lower pleasures, i.e. that given the opportunity, people will consistently prefer higher pleasures – ones relating to intellectual, moral, and aesthetic faculties – than lower pleasures relating to bodily and sensual stimuli.¹ But whichever pleasures they decide to indulge in, in fact whatever individuals decide to do, should be at their discretion for an individual will have the chance to attain their happiness so long as they have the capacity to decide for themselves. Because individuals are different, they will associate unique features of life with their happiness and it is this sovereignty of the individual “*over himself, over his body and mind*” that the state must protect. It is thus straightforward to logically connect Mill’s welfarist conception of the good with advocacy for the state acting as a guarantor of individual rights and liberties. Mill holds individual sovereignty sacred, and no individual can be coerced or inhibited in any way, even if the intention of the perpetrator is to make them happier.² In this way, Mill is more closely aligned with the concept of negative liberty, the focus on the absence of constraints or interference, rather than positive liberty – the focus on providing individuals with conditions or opportunities enabling their goals and interests.³ Following, the only circumstance in which any actor – state or citizen, is justified in exercising power over another member of the community is to prevent harm to themselves or others.⁴

Second, a consequentialist conception of the right means that Mill associates closely what is to be desired with what produces maximum welfare for society. Mill prioritizes the outcomes of actions themselves, as opposed to inherent moral characteristics of those actions; “*actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness*” (i.e. pain and the “privation of pleasure”).⁵ While the consequentialist theory of the right provides a framework for determining the

¹ John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism,” in *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 122.

² John Stuart Mill, “On Liberty,” in *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 12.

³ Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁴ Mill, “On Liberty,” 12.

⁵ Mill, “Utilitarianism,” 121.

morality of actions based on their outcomes, it itself does not determine the precise nature of the good itself. For this, it relies on the welfarist conception of the good that identifies happiness through individual sovereignty as the condition to be desired in society.

Marxism is an episode in dialectical materialism; in the position that material conditions of society – most particularly control over means of production – are the primary drivers of social change. In fact, Marx attributes developments in the history of human society entirely to changes in economic relations between classes; that ever-present contests between oppressor and oppressed result in either “*the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.*”⁶ The modern manifestation of class conflict to Marx is the transformation of a society stratified into various orders specifying social rank into a system of simplified class opposition; that is, a dichotomy between the landowning, capitalist bourgeoisie, and a commodified, propertyless proletariat.⁷ In this system, it is clear who acts as the antagonist:

*“(...) the worker sinks to the level of a commodity, the most miserable commodity; that the misery of the worker is universally proportional to the power and volume of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and thus the revival of monopoly in a more frightful form; and finally, that the distinction between capitalist and landowner, between agricultural laborer and industrial worker, disappears, and the whole society must divide into the two classes of proprietors and property less workers.”*⁸

For Marx, the manner in which we produce (i.e. the motivations and repercussions of our production) directly expresses what we are, and the relations with other individuals involved in our process of production determines our identity as a “*species-being.*”⁹ Thus, when the process of our production is

⁶ Karl Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 159.

⁷ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” 159.

⁸ Karl Marx, “*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 58.

⁹ Marx, “*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*,” 64.

overridden by a managerial force, when it is controlled by an agent external to ourselves, the result is that the laborer is “alienated” from the activity that is central to them being a fully realized, “conscious” human:

In taking from the man the object of his production, alienated labor takes from his species-life, his actual and objective existence as a species. It changes his superiority to the animal to inferiority, since he is deprived of nature, his inorganic body.¹⁰

Private property as the “consequence of externalized labour”¹¹ is thus one of two products of the capitalist system, alongside the system of wages in exchange for labour. The former represents the means of production owned by the bourgeoisie that allow them to extract surplus value from the labour of the proletariat. The latter, wages, are a system that produces for the proletariat neither human significance nor dignity¹² and leaves it with no property whatsoever. Instead, ‘wage-labour’ produces capital; but capital is not merely the consequence of the proletarians’ labour, but rather the means through which they are exploited; proletarians own only their capacity for labour which they sell to survive. Labourers can trade wages for personal possessions or small-scale private property, but they will never own capital – because capital is not merely a personal possession, but a social power – the power that allows the bourgeoisie to exploit the working class, maintain class division, and create an ‘unemployed surplus population for which there is no place either on the land or in the towns.’¹³

II. The Emergence of Tyranny

Section I helped illustrate how, for Mill, economic status is not of primary interest – the moral implications of one’s actions are. For Marx, however, economic status is everything; it captures entirely the context of a person’s social existence and explains their participation in social and historical movements. It follows that the perceptions of tyranny for Mill versus for Marx would be starkly different. For Mill this would rest upon a state that fails to provide personal liberty to its citizens and does not act according to utilitarian morality. For Marx, this would be the continuation of the unnatural and oppressive hierarchy in society that

¹⁰ Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” 64.

¹¹ Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” 66.

¹² Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” 67.

¹³ Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 203.

disallows humans from embracing their native existence. Though these perspectives of tyranny are different, both Marx and Mill consider societal structure – that is the distribution of power across individuals and the balance in the relationships between strata – as a key determinant of a tyrannical versus a benign society.

Both Mill and Marx consider the liberalization of society as giving rise to tyranny. For Mill, the transformation into popular sovereignty, which is the granting of rights and access to government to common individuals, and the adoption of concepts such as Republican self-government should not be evaluated at face value. He insists that even the people, the subordinates to the state, endowing government with the power to rule does not naturally purge of the possibility of tyranny. In fact, the possibility for the people ‘tyrannizing over themselves’¹⁴ is very realistic. A ruling majority has every capacity for tyranny over the minority,¹⁵ and it is on this premise that Mill constructs his view of the tyrannical state. He builds on the simple facet of oppression through public authority by describing a system in which society and government oppress in tandem: the former through repression of speech and intellectual liberty, the latter through repression by law. The “*tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling*”¹⁶ is a real threat for Mill, and he advocates that protection against homogenous status quo is equally as important as protection against the state exercising unwarranted political power in acts of suppression or coercion. Mill does, of course, recognize that a balance must be struck ‘between individual independence and social control,’ and there is no universal truth to the correct format for these limitations – every nation will see to them differently. With this analysis we begin to understand Mill’s model of tyrannical rule by understanding the bipartite nature of oppression by a majoritarian state.

I use the phrase ‘liberalization of society’ in the context of Karl Marx’s historical analysis to refer to the collapse of “*all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations*”¹⁷ and their replacement by the relation of the

¹⁴ Mill, “*On Liberty*,” 7-8.

¹⁵ Mill, “*On Liberty*,” 9.

¹⁶ Mill, “*On Liberty*,” 8.

¹⁷ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” 161.

bourgeoise to the proletariat. In contrast to the former, the latter class hierarchy is not “*veiled by religious and political illusions,*” but employs “*naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.*” It has paraded as a cosmopolitan class of revolution of production and consumption while covertly destroying national industries of old.¹⁸ The result has been the universal interdependence of nations and the compulsive adoption of the bourgeois system of production in the face of extinction. Marx portrays an image of inevitability in the rise of capitalism, and as such delivers a determinism to history reaching the capitalist stage before it can arrive at successive constitutions (elaboration in Section III). The important caveat here is that while Mill notes of only the potential for tyranny if the majority curtails the intellectual or physical sovereignty of the minority, Marx is absolute in the position that the tyrannical capitalist system is a necessary component of the process of history.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx uses Louis Bonaparte’s rise to power to illustrate that the reestablishment of an elite, aristocratic class in France was a historical regression back into archaic, uncivilized times. He views this tyranny as characterized by “*old myrmidons of the law*”¹⁹ as opposed to progressive classless doctrine. The “*liberal concessions*” that were hard-fought for in centuries of struggle have now been replaced with a “*shamelessly simple domination of sabre and the cow!*”²⁰ This illustrates Marx’s conception of tyranny by reiterating his vision of societal progress as a deterministic pursuit of an egalitarian society. Crucially, it also demonstrates the willingness of social classes – in this case the “*conservative peasantry*” seeking to consolidate their smallholdings, the lumpenproletariat, and the ruling elite – to coalesce; to safeguard their material interests against the proletariat. For Marx, the ascendancy of Louis Bonaparte represents exactly this malicious self-interest motivating oppressors. These oppressors should not be misunderstood for the “*revolutionary, conservative peasant that strikes out beyond the condition of his social existence*”²¹ and in doing so recognizes and acts upon the exploitation of those

¹⁸ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto,*” 162.

¹⁹ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,*” 190.

²⁰ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,*” 191.

²¹ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,*” 201.

lacking similar endowments. The conservative peasants must rather be understood through a rationale of blatant self-interest and the motivation to see themselves and their smallholding saved and favored.

The parasitic influence of self-interest for Marx is also resembled in the erosion of patriotism and cultural values of old that used to embody ‘the ideal form of property.’²² The tyrannical ‘*idees napoleoniennes*’ have, by introducing notions of property and wealth, changed the spirit of the army: “*the army itself is no longer the flower of the peasant youth (...) It now performs its deeds of valor by hunting down the peasants like chamois, and in organized drives, by doing gendarme duty.*”²³ With this, Marx emphasizes that the true function of law enforcement under capitalism is to uphold property rights and thereby politically repress the subservient proletarian class. This theoretical approach has been adopted in many contemporary contexts, including Michel Foucault’s “Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison”²⁴: a historical analysis of the modern penal system with its roots in the French Revolution. Foucault introduces the concept of disciplinary power as a component of the top-down control of discourse and ideology. Disciplinary power operates through surveillance, normalization, and hierarchical observation. Surveillance of the defiant creates a pervasive atmosphere of visibility and control, leading to self-discipline and conformity to societal norms. Prisons act to deprive the individual of his freedom and to reform him in accordance with surrounding society. Normalization involves the gradual, passive enforcement of norms and standards that dictate desirable behaviour and qualities in society, e.g. through educational institutions. Finally. Hierarchical observation refers to the structured organization of social institutions where authority figures exercising control over those lower in the hierarchy ensured compliance with established norms and regulations. Foucault’s work provides insights into the subtle manifestations of tyranny that may arrive, beyond the umbrella term of class, state, or autocratic oppression. Foucault’s work is also a valuable

²² Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*,” 204.

²³ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*,” 204.

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

complement to Marx's; it highlights the ways in which power operates on the micro level and thereby draws attention to how top-down power might shape everyday interactions.

Transitioning back to Mill, the tendency of a ruling authority to disperse its ideology to the lower levels of society is a concept that is also relevant with his philosophy, albeit in a slightly different iteration. Mill recognizes that the formation of a majority in society might simplify to which individuals are the most active part of the people.²⁵ This might be a collection of people with a diverse range of backgrounds and identities, but what will ultimately bind them together is their willingness to express themselves as a majority. As opposed to coalescing for the purpose of material interests, however, Mill highlights majorities' interest in preserving the status quo. Both thinkers provide a solution to the oppressed groups – but where Marx suggests a revision of relations between labour and capital, Mills calls for non-conformity and eccentricity in order to break through the tyranny of opinion.²⁶

The overwhelming influence of a dominant class is a feature of a tyrannical state that is obvious when considering Marx, but it is also a feature of Mill's analysis.

*Wherever there is an ascendant class, a large portion of the morality of the country emanates from its class interests, and its feelings of class superiority. (...) Where, on the other hand, a class, formerly ascendant, has lost its ascendancy, or where its ascendancy is unpopular, the prevailing moral sentiments frequently bear the impress of an impatient dislike of superiority.*²⁷

The above is to show that Mill recognizes a top-down influence of ideology from a ruling class. It is for this reason that mill recognizes how difficult it is to modify a prevalent morality – even forward-thinking theorists, according to him, can seldom succeed in this. When in the context of a society with a prevalent class division, Mill does not necessarily believe in a deliberative process of discussion through which society's morality can be arbitrarily created. Instead, he sees it more as a system of top-down imposition,

²⁵ Mill, "On Liberty," 7.

²⁶ Mill, "On Liberty," 66.

²⁷ Mill, "On Liberty," 10.

in the first place, followed by potential – but not inevitable (and this is why he seeks to protect minority rights to expression) – feedback whereby subordinate or minority citizens respond to the quality of the morality imposed upon them by the ascendant class. The passage connects the governing philosophy decided on by the ruling elite with the overarching societal morality present in the minds of the populace. The implication here is that if a government respects the provision of individual liberties and virtuous action that prioritizes utilitarianism, the citizenry will motivate itself to do the same. An important interaction of the above with Marxist thought is that while Marx sees a tyrannical system in which the presence of a dominant bourgeoisie class is by definition accompanied by a subordinate proletarian class in perpetuity, an equally malign system for Mill would consist of the complete eradication of the minority; both in intellectual and in behavioral suppression. Mill visualizes a system of passive curtailment in which an absence of correct government intervention will lead to a tyrannical homogeneity. While Marx would argue for the opposite (i.e. an absence of activity from a bourgeois class would in essence equal to the absence of the class itself, and therefore of class conflict), he sees a system in which the bourgeoisie actively act to maintain class divisions through the maintenance of privately owned capital and the perpetration of capitalist production. Notwithstanding this difference, Marx does not rule out the possibility for ideological homogeneity – in fact, he sees it as inevitable. This will be expanded upon in Section III.

Both Marx's and Mill's philosophies about the tyrannical rule of classes hold up when shrunk into autocratic rule. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx views an executive individual that sits above a parliamentary representation of the general will of the people as necessarily antagonistic to in fact to all remaining members of society; where such autocrats exist, the despotism of an elite class falls back beneath the despotism of individual and all classes equally powerless against this despotism are forced into subjugation.²⁸ It is not as if the inferiority of class to the autocrat now implies a more benign outlook on the former mode of government with a ruling bourgeoisie; one despotism is merely substituted for another, and the people are equally oppressed irrespective of the origin of oppression. Now, however, not only are the

²⁸ Marx, "*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*," 198.

interests of the nation unrepresented in government, the tools of government that formerly served the bourgeoisie now serve the private interests of the single autocrat at the top – Republicanism supposedly did nothing to strengthen the representation of the general will of the people in government.²⁹ In fact, though Bonaparte imitates an ambassador of the general will, he fails at delivering the only solution and enlightening society on class struggle. Instead, he seeks to tyrannically “*turn all the property, all the labour of France, into a personal obligation to himself.*”³⁰ Whilst he hopes to “*appear as the patriarchal benefactor of all classes,*” he cannot hide the fact that “*he cannot give to one class without taking from another.*” Despite his warnings against majoritarian curtailment of freedoms, Mill does concede that in a deliberating, representative body, minorities must be overruled.³¹ Nevertheless, Mill’s detail is that minorities cannot lose their representation in government and, “*in a really equal democracy,*” they must be proportionately represented. This is a much more nuanced approach to Marx’s ultimatum between a ruling bourgeoisie – which itself implies agreement on political designs within classes grouped by economic status – and the proletariat. Mill’s recognition that individuals can identify and homogenize by any arbitrary range of characteristics is of course more applicable to the real world than Marx’s insistence on division into a bipolar set of economic status.

III. Preventing Tyranny: The Ideal State

To better understand both Marx’s and Mill’s perspectives on tyranny, it is worthwhile to consider how tyranny could be prevented according to them. In this section, I scrutinize both thinkers’ visions for the ideal state – the state absent of tyranny. The ways in which the bourgeois and the proletariat come to power for Marx are vastly different. In describing the nature of proletarian interventions in society, Marx conveys an image of an introspective class that approximates Mill’s vision for self-criticism as a path toward truth and improvement. For Marx, the arrival of the bourgeoisie leads to a “*crapulent depression*” that

²⁹ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,*” 199.

³⁰ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,*” 206.

³¹ John Stuart Mill, “*Considerations on Representative Government,*” in *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 265.

overwhelms society before it can integrate the new system of oppression.³² By contrast, proletarian revolutions are characterized by ‘constant self-criticism’ and ‘unmerciful derision of their inadequacies and weaknesses.’ He clearly believes in a universality to proletarian revolutions; they are able to admit possible failures of preceding attempts at revolution, but in doing so will inevitably lead to the ultimate adoption of the new proletarian system in a way that will ‘make all turning back impossible.’³³ This is an interesting compatibility with Mill, because it seems that the proletariat is precisely the kind of social group that behaves as Mill would recommend a group – particularly a majority group – to behave:

"He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of [arriving at truth]. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion..."³⁴

It is clear from the above quote and in fact from the bulk of Mill’s discourse on ideas and intellect that he strongly believes in the importance of openness to opposing viewpoints and engaging in genuine dialogue with those who hold different beliefs. To him, merely being aware of an opposing viewpoint is not enough – instead, individuals must seek to discover the most potent elements of alternative perspectives and evaluate them to their own beliefs. Despite this compatibility with Marx’s description of the proletariat, Marx does not mention an equally comprehensive process of evaluation of ideas – he merely ascribes the virtue of reflecting on past mistakes to the proletariat. For proletarians to engage in discourse with the bourgeoisie would be a pointless effort because there is a universal truth to class relationships and the dynamics of oppression in capitalist society that could not be questioned regardless of the fortitude of bourgeois rationale.

As mentioned in Section I, in evaluating class dynamics and his materialistically dialectical account of history, Marx takes it as inevitable that a proletarian revolt will rise and tyranny will ultimately subside, in

³² Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*,” 191.

³³ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*,” 191.

³⁴ Mill, “*On Liberty*,” 37.

accordance with “*the progress of history*”.³⁵ Because the capitalist tyranny is an unsustainable experiment in production and property, a proletarian revolt will be a natural successor to bourgeoisie class rule. This point is evident in Marx’s discussion of Napoleon’s reign: “*his experiments will burst like soap bubbles when they come in contact with the relations of production.*”³⁶ In fact, he specifies that the bourgeoisie itself will eventually become conflicted as some of its members come to understand that private capital ownership and the exploitation of production are features “*antagonistic to the progress of history.*”³⁷ As the fight of the bourgeoisie pivots from only with the old aristocracy to now portions of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of foreign countries, it will inevitably appeal for the support of the proletariat; and in involving the proletariat in the political arena in this way, the proletariat will become armed with weapons (of political and general education) to fight the bourgeoisie itself.³⁸ Ultimately, the proletariat alone becomes the only historically revolutionary class; that is it is the only class successful in advancing society to the end goal; to an egalitarian, classless society. This version of society will not ‘deprive an individual from appropriating the products of society, but it will deprive of the capacity to subjugate the labour of others,’ that is to exploit the labour of others by appropriating their produce.³⁹

Mill does not take it for granted at all that individual liberties will be protected in society – that is that tyranny will be prevented – and therefore advises about the need to carefully design political systems. In fact, he specifies that “*every kind and degree of evil of which mankind are susceptible, may be inflicted on them by their government.*”⁴⁰ Indeed, an improper government will fail to allow its subordinates to engage in good, virtuous action to the utilitarian benefit of society: “*none of the good which social existence is capable of, can be any further realized than as the constitution of the government is compatible with, and allows scope for, its attainment.*”⁴¹ Section I mentioned the insistence that people in Mill’s world prefer

³⁵ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” 167.

³⁶ Marx, “*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*,” 202.

³⁷ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” 167.

³⁸ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” 167.

³⁹ Marx, “*The Communist Manifesto*,” 172

⁴⁰ Mill, “*On Liberty*,” 191.

⁴¹ Mill, “*On Liberty*,” 191.

‘higher’ pleasures. This justifies why the freedom of thought and expression are particularly valuable to Mill, and this is why they should be protected by government: these freedoms provide the capacity to engage in higher pleasures.

Conclusion

The analysis in this paper helps to outline how an improper organization of society is the crucial point of focus for both John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx. Mill’s fear of tyranny interrupting the proper functions of society is based on threats that tyrannical governance might create to individual liberty in its many facets, from simple physical freedom to the freedom to express oneself. Marx, on the other hand, defines tyranny by what we would today consider economic oppression. Naturally, to him it is much more than that; the exploitation of the labour of the proletariat is to Marx deeply tied to the exploitation of their humanity, and therefore is the fundamental issue that society ought to resolve. In effect, both thinkers consider the ascendance of a dominant ruling class that does not act in the interest of individuals foreign to its class as the staple of tyranny in a society. But the fundamental difference in how they arrive at their reasoning for this oppression is that while Mill places much attention on the processes of deliberation, debate, and intellectual exchange in order to arrive at solutions that are most adequate to humanity’s problems, Marx begins by identifying humanity’s primary problem itself, class conflict. This paper sought to employ this contrast in comparing both thinkers; it is imperative when engaging in a deeper analysis of their infamous philosophies.

A Note on Improvement from PRO

The main element of my first “Passage, Reflection, and Ordering” assignment that I set out to change for the purpose of this sequel was to revise my analysis of Marx. I re-read the densest parts of the ascribed readings, extracted more quotations, and deeply rethought how I could approach his comparison with Mill. I also directly addressed some of Stefan’s feedback, seen for instance on page 13 with my comparison of Marx’s description of the nature of proletarian revolutions to the features of a desirable, self-critical group observed in Mill’s writing. Though I did not have a specific structure for the essay in mind when writing the first assignment, I made sure to incorporate Stefan’s feedback about beginning by laying out with a clear account of the theoretical underpinnings of both thinkers’ views on tyranny. Hence, I wrote Section I, in which my motivation was to make it so that the reader would not have doubts as to how a normative claim about one or another type of rule made by either thinker made sense based on their different worldviews.

Bibliography

- Berlin, Isaiah. "Two Concepts of Liberty." In *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish : The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.
- Marx, Karl. "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts." In *Selected Writings*, edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- . "The Communist Manifesto." In *Selected Writings*, edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- . "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." In *Selected Writings*, edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- Mill, John Stuart. "Considerations on Representative Government." In *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- . "On Liberty." In *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- . "Utilitarianism." In *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.