

COMMUNISM MEETS CRENSHAW

DEMETRIOS GIANNAKARIS*

ABSTRACT

Il concetto introdotto dalla teorica femminista Kimberle Crenshaw, noto come “intersezionalità”, si è imposto nell’identificare e criticare i livelli di discriminazione esperiti dagli individui in base alle loro identità sociali, politiche ed economiche sovrapposte. È attraverso questo discorso intersettoriale che si può cominciare a comprendere i livelli di discriminazione e disuguaglianza che si sviluppano e che, a loro volta, vengono rafforzati dal modello politico liberale che domina la politica americana. Allo stesso modo, i problemi socioeconomici contemporanei all’interno degli Stati Uniti sono stati evidenziati sviluppando movimenti socialisti all’interno del paese, particolarmente a partire dallo storico oppositore del liberalismo, il marxismo. È possibile che i marxisti possano cooperare ideologicamente e praticamente con gli “intersezionalisti” per affrontare le questioni socioeconomiche contemporanee negli Stati Uniti? Questo saggio cerca di rispondere a questa domanda per mezzo di un confronto puntuale tra la teoria politico-economica marxista contemporanea e il pensiero intersezionale.

A concept introduced by feminist theorist Kimberle Crenshaw known as “Intersectionality” has emerged, identifying and critiquing compounded levels of discrimination experienced by individuals based on their overlapping social, political, and economic identities. It is through this Intersectional discourse that one can begin to comprehend the levels of discrimination and inequality that is born and in turn reinforced by the Liberal political model that dominates U.S. politics. Likewise, contemporary socioeconomic problems within the U.S. have been highlighted by developing socialist movements within the country, particularly by the historic opponent of Liberalism, Marxism. Is it possible that Marxists can cooperate ideologically and practically with Intersectionalists in order to address contemporary socioeconomic issues within the U.S.? This paper seeks to answer this question through a side by side comparison of contemporary Marxist political and economic theory with Intersectional thought.

Introduction

The final years of the 20th century had apparently marked the end of international ideological struggle for the betterment of society. Fascism had been “defeated” and Communism had “failed”, while Western Liberal Democracy pre-

* Postgraduate student of Politics, Philosophy, and Economics dell’Università di Bari Aldo Moro.

vailed as the only answer to society's demands for a better, more equal future. Francis Fukuyama famously hailed this period as "The End of History" proclaiming it, "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western Liberal Democracy as the final form of human government". Fukuyama even went so far as to declare that liberal egalitarianism in the United States represented the essential achievement of the classless society envisioned by Marx.¹ Fast forward thirty years later to the United States, the self-proclaimed champion of Liberal Democracy and we can see that Fukuyama could not have been more wrong. Liberal Democracy in the United States continues to be plagued by socio-political problems new and old; the greatest class inequality ever seen in history, and the resurgence of ideological opposition to Liberalism from the community level to the President himself. In fact, according to the Human Rights Watch World Report 2017 many laws and practices in the US violate internationally recognized human rights; particularly in cases involving racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, low income families and prisoners.²

In recent years the outcry against this disproportionate violation of human rights and discrimination against minorities in the US has been addressed by many contemporary thinkers. One of these thinkers is Kimberle Crenshaw, a professor at the Columbia Law school and leading scholar of critical race theory. Dr. Crenshaw introduced to the world the idea of Intersectionality, explaining that marginalized groups of individuals can experience multiple forms of discrimination in a cumulative way.³ In this essay I will examine Intersectionality in the context of contemporary Liberal and Marxist thought determining its applicability in solving modern social and political issues. First, I will briefly outline Liberal theory in the U.S. context and the Intersectional critiques on the failures of Modern Liberalism. Then, I will introduce some contemporary social and political issues in the US and examine the compatibility of Intersectional and Marxist perspectives. Ultimately, leading to my conclusion that although Intersectionality may fail to offer substantial solutions to the foundations of injustice

¹ F. Fukuyama "The End of History?" in *The Geopolitics Reader*, by Tuathail Gearóid Ó et al., Routledge 2011, pp. 114–124.

² K.Roth "United States" in *Human Rights Watch World Report 2017: Events of 2016*, Seven Stories Press, New York 2017, pp. 633–653.

³ "Intersectionality" *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster, 2018, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality.

and inequality in contemporary society; intersectionality may serve as a lens through which modern Marxist thought may engage with Liberalism to identify and provide a socialist solution to modern social, political, and economic issues.

We're All Liberals Here

“Liberal” is a term that you will undoubtedly hear extensively used within any modern American political discourse, particularly in the media. The term, at least at the American community level suggests progressivism, welfare-state, “Identity Politics”, and the overall political stances of the Democratic Party. The opposite of an “American Liberal” would be an American “Conservative”, characteristic of the political stances of the Republican Party; small government, personal liberty, and free trade. Interestingly, the reality not apparent to most Americans is that both parties are considered “Liberals” according to political scientists. Both these modern political parties in America do indeed trace their ideological roots back to classical Liberalism. Where they differ, is in their attachment to the classical ideas of liberalism and where they stand on contemporary issues. To illustrate, classical liberalism would be the ideas of John Locke, Adam Smith, Von Hayek etc. Ideas of limited secular government, individual freedom, and private property within a free market, all upheld by the sacred rule of law. These classical Liberal ideas are the foundations on which American society were built and are essentially the ideas that Republicans wish to “conserve” against what they see as corruption of these ideals by more Modern Liberal thinkers within the Democratic Party. Modern Liberalism on the other hand, although holding many of the same core beliefs, tends to view Liberalism more in the sense of John Stuart Mill, Hobhouse, and Rawls.⁴ They believe in “more government” involvement in the economy, a welfare system, and some infringements on personal freedoms all in the name of a more Rawlsian “Theory of Justice”. Although there has been much opposition, this modern idea of Liberalism has indeed become the predominant form of politics that we see hailed in America today as the only ideology which guarantees those constitutional promises of, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”.

Yet, now in 2018 we find ourselves in an America where not just justice, but all the pillars of Liberalism are questioned by the reality of the everyday lives of

⁴ A. Ryan *Liberalism. A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, by Robert E. Goodin et al., Blackwell Publishing, Hoboken (NJ) 2007, pp. 360–382.

its citizens. To illustrate, even with a welfare system, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2017 12.3% or approximately 40 million Americans were living in poverty.⁵ An unspeakable number for a nation with a current GDP of around \$18 trillion, the largest accumulation of wealth in the history of humanity.⁶ Some additional facts; there is to date no free healthcare provided to citizens of the U.S. leaving 28.5 million Americans in 2017 without health insurance.⁷ Also, there are currently 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States 50 thousand of which are children in arguably inhumane conditions. There is also an ever-increasing level of gun violence, police brutality, and numerous obstacles in the way of equal labor rights, healthcare rights, and rights for non-citizens.⁸

Shocking as these statistics are, this data is given for the U.S. population as a whole. Statistics showing the disproportionate effect the system has on the disadvantaged and on minorities within the country are even more astounding, assuming they are even available. This is precisely one of the issues that Kimberle Crenshaw raises in her Intersectionality debate. She explains that there is a systemic focus on the struggles of the most privileged group members of society marginalizing those who are multiply burdened by oppression.⁹ For example, of that 12.3% overall Poverty Rate, African Americans as a group have a 21% Poverty Rate, the highest of any demographic within the United States. Likewise, when poverty dynamics are viewed over time (2009-2013) we see that minority groups, African Americans most of all, are far less likely to escape poverty than their white counterparts.¹⁰ Additionally, there are no statistics to show for what the Poverty Rate looks like for minority groups experiencing multiple levels of discrimination such as black women or LGBTQ Hispanic women, etc. Therefore, we see as Kimberle Crenshaw explains, even when Liberalism attempts to mend

⁵ "U.S. Poverty Statistics." *Federal Safety Net*, 2018, federalsafetynet.com/us-poverty-statistics.html.

⁶ "GDP (Current US\$)." *Data*, World Bank, 2017, data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD.

⁷ US Census Bureau. "Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2017." *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2017*, United States Census Bureau, 13 Sept. 2018, www.census.gov/library/publications/2018/demo/p60-264.html.

⁸ K. Roth, "United States." *Human Rights Watch World Report 2017*, pp. 633–653.

⁹ K. Crenshaw "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" in *Feminism in the Law: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, vol. 1989, University of Chicago Legal Forum, Chicago 1989, pp. 139–167, chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8.

¹⁰ "U.S. Poverty Statistics." *Federal Safety Net*, 2018, federalsafetynet.com/us-poverty-statistics.html.

the conditions of disadvantaged groups, it is done either intentionally or unintentionally to the benefit of the “majority of a minority” considering only single levels not compounded levels of discrimination.¹¹

This disproportionate trend acting against minority groups exemplified by the Poverty Rate can be seen in a wide array of modern social and political issues that I will continue to explore throughout this essay. Clearly when viewed through an Intersectional lens, Liberalism alone has either neglected or utterly failed to live up to its standards of equality and justice for all. What then is the solution? In the spirit of Liberalism, I would suggest that in order to find solutions to today’s problems, all views must be taken into consideration, even those of opposing ideology. After all, who better to critique you than your ideological enemy?

“Our Struggle”

Today’s financial crises, growing inequality, racial tensions and overall disappointment with Modern Liberalism has seen the rebirth of ideologies thought shelved to the library of history. Not since the dark era of civil rights or the Great Depression have the ideas of socialism and Marxism had the appeal to Americans the way that they do today. Socialism, in America? Twenty or thirty years ago the reply to this question would surely be, “Never”. Today however, an American youth, uncorrupted by “Red Scares”, “McCarthyism” and endless anti-communist propaganda campaigns have come to embrace the ideas of socialism and even flirt with the ideas of Marx. Since 2010 Americans between the ages of 18-29 viewing capitalism positively dropped from 68% to 45% in 2018.¹² The Democratic Socialist Party of America (DSA) rose from approximately 5,000 members in 2016 with the Bernie Sanders campaign to approximately 39,000 in 2018 right before the election of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s (self-proclaimed socialist).¹³ These numbers are an unprecedented level of socialist growth in a

¹¹ K. Crenshaw “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” in *Feminism in the Law: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, vol. 1989, pp. 139–167, chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8.

¹² J. Kishore “Growing Support for Socialism in the United States” in *Growing Support for Socialism in the United States*, World Socialist Web Site Wsws.org Published by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), 14 Aug. 2018, www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/08/14/grow-a14.html.

¹³ J. Bustelo “DSA’s Explosive Growth: A Marxist Analysis” In *Medium*, Medium, 15 Aug. 2018, medium.com/@pplswar/dsas-explosive-growth-a-marxist-analysis-cfb89836177b.

country that has always been the pioneer of Liberalism's capitalist underpinnings. However, although this American flirtation with socialism is promising, there is a strong line that separates the "Democratic Socialism" of Bernie Sanders with the true socialism envisioned by Karl Marx. But could this flirtation with socialism lead to a true dialogue between Marxism and Liberalism to bring about some form of socialist change, solving contemporary issues? I would argue yes and will attempt to explain how I believe Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality debate may just be a way in which this dialogue is possible. First however, I will introduce the core beliefs of Marxism and compare its compatibility within the realm of Intersectional thought.

What exactly is Marxism today? Is it the same ideology that we saw manifested in the 20th century? Is it doomed to fail as it previously did all over the world? Or like Liberalism, has it perhaps undergone some changes over time that make some of its ideas very applicable to our modern society? I would argue that indeed Marxism has evolved quite a bit, but it still stands true to the core beliefs of classical Marxism. To describe classical Marxism would take an entire course of study on its own, but in the simplest terms I would summarize it as an ideology which advocates for a socialist system in which private property is abolished and the economic means of production are owned and administered by an egalitarian classless society of workers. The means to achieve this socialist society historically has always been the violent overthrow of capital and emancipation by and of the working-class proletariat.¹⁴ Marxism today however, known as Analytical Marxism, has evolved in that it has come to accept that Marx's inevitable proletariat revolution and the abundance of resources are likely unrealistic. Instead, Analytical Marxism concerns itself with two main stances against Rawlsian Liberalism; the goal of establishing an alternative to liberal theories of justice, and true to classical Marxism, building an egalitarian socialist society by ending unjust exploitation through the abolition of private property.

These two Analytical Marxian ideas happen to fit quite complementary to many ideas brought forward by Kimberle Crenshaw in her paper on Intersectionality. First for example, Analytical Marxism outright rejects the idea of Liberal juridical equality believing that, «equal juridical rights have unequal effects, since they

¹⁴ R. Sewell, and A. Woods. "What Is Marxism?" *In Defence of Marxism*, In Defence of Marxism, 15 Mar. 2000, www.marxist.com/what-is-marxism-economics-materialism.htm.

only specify a limited number of the morally relevant standpoints». ¹⁵ This idea that the current liberal judiciary is incapable of assessing the various existing viewpoints of the citizens in which it governs is precisely echoed by Kimberle Crenshaw through her various court case examples in her paper, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex”. In her paper she presents examples of black women bringing to court cases of discrimination that were unsuccessful due to the lack of juridical capability to effectively understand or even identify these women’s compounded levels of discrimination. In these cases, black women could not successfully bring a discrimination case to court as “black women” but rather only as a “black”, or as “women”. Thus, rendering their individual intersectional experiences of discrimination obsolete. This singular view of discrimination and failure to address the relevant standpoint of a “black woman” is according to Crenshaw, «not simply a matter of political will, but also due to the influence of a way of thinking about discrimination which structures politics so that struggles are categorized as single issues». ¹⁶ This failure of the judiciary to address the relevant viewpoints of black women outlined by Crenshaw is precisely the same issue raised by Analytical Marxists, in that it is not simply a failure of the judiciary but a failure in the prevailing understanding of equality offered by the Liberal theory of justice.

Another instance where we can see Analytical Marxism and Crenshaw’s Intersectionality align is in the Marxian views of exploitation. Exploitation according to Marxists in the simplest terms is a result of the private ownership of the means of production which gives way to the inherently exploitative wage-labor relationship. ¹⁷ What is it about this wage-labor relationship that is inherently exploitative and how does it relate to the notions of compounded discrimination explained by Kimberle Crenshaw? To answer this one must look at the result of the wage-labor relationship in capitalism and what implications it has on the working-class citizen. The wage-labor relationship and capitalism are sustained through wages kept at a level necessary to maintain class structure through eco-

¹⁵ W. Kymlicka “Marxism”, in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: an Introduction*, by W. Kymlicka, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 167–207.

¹⁶ K. Crenshaw “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” in *Feminism in the Law: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, vol. 1989, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989, pp. 139–167, chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/voll1989/iss1/8.

¹⁷ W. Kymlicka “Marxism”, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: an Introduction*, cit.

conomic bondage. This system effectively creates numerous class gateways (education, healthcare, legal system etc.) found throughout our society that reinforce current class structure hindering citizens ability to ascend to a higher class. This system of class reinforcement has a profoundly strong effect therefore on those citizens who already find themselves in a state of disadvantage and multiple discrimination such as Intersectional minorities. To illustrate my point, let us look at the state of the US prisons and their effects on minorities, which are considered in and of themselves a violation of international human rights.¹⁸

There are currently over 2 million people incarcerated in the U.S., around 25% of the world's entire prison population. Of these 2 million people 71.4% of federal inmates are African American or Hispanic while making up only 21.3% of the entire U.S. population. A similar pattern can also be seen in the judiciaries sentencing of individuals where African Americans and Hispanics receive 20 to 50 times longer sentences than their white counterparts for the same crimes.¹⁹ This disproportion seen in the prison system is clearly correlated to the statistical disproportion we see in the Poverty Rate mentioned previously. It is without a doubt a significant correlation that those individuals of lower economic class are both disadvantaged and discriminated against in a compounded way based on their race and their economic situation. The result of this compounded level of discrimination is the disproportionate numbers of incarcerated minorities we see, precisely the way Kimberle Crenshaw describes in Intersectionality. In addition, it is a fact in the U.S. that with the right amount of money and a lawyer one can escape "justice" or at least receive some sort of reduced sentence. How is it then, that an economically disadvantaged and discriminated individual can afford to keep themselves out of prison? The answer is, that they simply cannot afford to. The unfortunate fact then is that individuals born into the less privileged economic or racial class will always be more likely to be negatively affected by the judicial system. Moreover, after incarceration the compounded intersectional effects of discrimination and disadvantage continue. Those people of color released from prison have disparities in wage trajectory after incarceration with wages growing at a rate 21% slower than

¹⁸ K. Roth. "United States" in *Human Rights Watch World Report 2017: Events of 2016*, Seven Stories Press, New York 2017, pp. 633–653.

¹⁹ A. Pariona "Incarceration Rates By Race, Ethnicity, And Gender In The U.S." *WorldAtlas*, WorldAtlas, 13 July 2016, www.worldatlas.com/articles/incarceration-rates-by-race-ethnicity-and-gender-in-the-u-s.html.

their white counterparts. Minorities released from prison are then also underrepresented in the voting pool as felons do not have the right to vote leaving 13% of African American men unable to participate in political change.²⁰ All the above data resulting from a disadvantaged economic position that disproportionately affects minorities creating a cycle of disadvantage and discrimination that is not only inescapable but systemically destructive to every aspect of their lives.

This cycle is precisely what Kimberle Crenshaw explains in her Intersectionality discourses; that one form of discrimination simply compounds the next and that there is no current model for addressing this issue. In this case, economic exploitation and class bondage explained through a Marxian perspective makes a clear intersection with the compound effects of multiple levels of race and class discrimination explained by Crenshaw in intersectionality. Therefore, I see the possibility of modern Analytical Marxist discourse as an appropriate vessel through which Intersectionality and Marxism together can address economic exploitation and its disproportionate effect on minorities.

It may sound quite ambitious to wish to change the underlying framework of exploitation and juridical justice so entrenched in Liberal America, but again we find unlikely allies in Intersectionality and Marxism that wish to do just that. In her Intersectionality discourse Kimberle Crenshaw finishes her paper explaining the need for a “bottom up” approach to solving the current ills of racism and sexism in our society. She says, «If efforts instead began with addressing the needs and problems of those who are most disadvantaged and with restructuring and remaking the world where necessary, then others who are singularly disadvantaged would also benefit».²¹ Here Crenshaw is again echoing modern Marxist thought in that she is advocating for a “bottom-up” approach in understanding the most disadvantaged members of society and for structural changes to the system in place that has proven to fail in order to produce a more just and equal so-

²⁰ S. Kerby “The Top 10 Most Startling Facts About People of Color and Criminal Justice in the United States” in *Center for American Progress*, 29 May 2015, www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2012/03/13/11351/the-top-10-most-startling-facts-about-people-of-color-and-criminal-justice-in-the-united-states/.

²¹ K. Crenshaw “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” in *Feminism in the Law: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, vol. 1989, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989, pp. 139–167, chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8.

ciety for all individuals. Modern Marxism advocates for much of the same in their critiques of Liberal Justice, their wish to end exploitation through a “bottom up” class struggle, and their dream of a truly egalitarian classless socialist society. These shared goals I believe can lead to a truly productive relationship between modern Marxists and Intersectionalists. That is, if and only if conflicting ideas between the two discourses can be understood and overcome.

“Unlikely Allies”

As mentioned previously, modern Marxism like Liberalism has undergone some changes since the days of hardline ideologues like the Soviet Union and Maoist China. However, it is important to highlight that unlike Liberalism, changes or “revisions” (as Marxists call them) to Marxist ideology are few and highly controversial within Marxist circles. Therefore, it is crucial that, in order to engage with Liberalism Intersectionality and modern Marxists must recognize their conflicting ideas, analyze them, and move forward in negotiated agreement. In this final section I will outline where Marxism and Intersectionality will inevitably conflict and how I believe although conflicting in some respects, Marxism and Intersectionality have much in common and could mutually benefit each other in engaging the modern social and political problems of Liberal America.

There are two major areas where Marxism and Intersectionality may conflict; their philosophical means of identifying the roots of discrimination and oppression as well as their method of solving said issues. First, in terms of their philosophical views, Marxism tends to be objective in viewing the origins of discrimination while Intersectionality tends to be quite subjective. The Marxist objective view is that racism, sexism, etc. are all rooted in historical class society and the needs of capital, protected by an unjust Liberal judiciary. Conversely, Intersectionalists and post-modern thinkers subjective view is that forms of discrimination are rooted in the belief system of society itself and are deeply intertwined with one another.²² Marxists will argue against this subjective approach explaining it will lead only to individualism, self-contemplation, and the division of the working-class movement. Examples Marxist cite for this claim are the existence of the modern divisive “Identity Politics” and “Privilege Politics” movements

²² A. J. Bohrer “Intersectionality and Marxism” in *Historical Materialism*, www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/intersectionality-and-marxism.

that have emerged from the same sources of thought as Intersectionality. For Marxists all forms of individual discrimination will undoubtedly be understood but quickly dismissed in the name of a unified class struggle. For Intersectionalists this will seemingly be a dismissal of their oppression and will undoubtedly be a source of friction between the two discourses.

Furthermore, the methods for dealing with discrimination, racism, and some of today's contemporary issues will also differ between Marxists and Intersectionalists. Marxists although in agreement with Crenshaw's identification of compounded discrimination argue that Crenshaw herself and many Intersectionalists do not wish to truly change the foundations on which the Liberal judicial system they criticize stands. They believe that Intersectionalists simply wish for new protective laws for newly designated minority groups. They believe this is not only time and cost ineffective but will only further the already existing divides between minority groups.²³ Marxists groups however different, will always stand united in their belief that all the sources of identified oppression, discrimination, and their extensions arise from the social and economic conditions that the current Liberal system rests upon. Marxists will always insist that capitalism, an unjust judiciary that protects it, private property, and individualism must be replaced with a socialist society that can only manifest through unified class action. This they believe, is the only way to solve the problems that they confess Intersectionality does an excellent job of identifying.

Now, although quite different in their approaches, there have been many historical attempts to join the ideas of Intersectionality and Marxism and several examples where the two discourses have come together in agreement. For example, there have been discussions of an "Intersectional Theory of Capitalism" as well as many women of color feminists who discuss Intersectional issues and Marxism side by side such as Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Claudia Jones, Martha Gimenez, and Maria Lugones. To further illustrate, I present an excerpt from the Combachee River Collective Statement, a fundamental text of Intersectionality. «We realize that the liberation of all oppressed peoples necessitates the destruction of the political and economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy. We are socialists because we believe that work must be organized

²³ J. Cassell "Marxism vs. Intersectionality" in *In Defence of Marxism*, In Defence of Marxism, 13 July 2017, www.marxist.com/marxism-vs-intersectionality.htm.

for the collective benefit of those who do the work and create the products, not for the profit of the bosses... Although we are essentially in agreement with Marx's theory as it is applied to the very specific economic relationships he analyzed, we know that his analysis must be extended further for us to understand our specific economic situation as Black women».²⁴ The excerpt presented really summarizes perfectly the acknowledgment and the will for a collective effort between Intersectionalists and Marxists. Many similar texts can be found upon research; too many to list in a short essay, but clearly it is evident that there exists a profound feminist critique of capitalism, advocacy for class awareness, and socialism within Intersectionality. I believe that these are the starting points from which these apparently conflicting discourses may together engage many if not all the contemporary social and political issues of modern society.

Conclusion – The Real “Change You Can Believe In”

The problem with today's Modern Liberalism according to some scholars lies in the fact that it has overcommitted itself politically, and economically to the point that not only can it not deliver its promises but has at the same time violated its classical principles.²⁵ We saw this in the racial disparity in the Poverty Rate, and in prison demographics, but similar trends can be seen in several other modern socio-economic issues as well. Occupational and residential sex/race/class segregation, Great Depression levels of wealth inequality, racial gaps in education, child poverty levels higher than any other rich nation in the world and a complete lack of universal healthcare that discriminates against the LGBTQ community.²⁶ These issues are just the surface and none of them are new. These are problems that have plagued the U.S. for many years despite numerous efforts of Liberal reform. Where then does the solution to these problems lie? I believe in the marriage of Intersectionality and modern Marxism.

In Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality and in Marxism we saw the flaws in

²⁴ A. J. Bohrer “Intersectionality and Marxism”, in *Historical Materialism*, www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/intersectionality-and-marxism.

²⁵ A. Ryan “Liberalism”, in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, by Robert E. Goodin et al., Blackwell Publishing, Hoboken (NJ) 2007, pp. 360–382.

²⁶ “20 Facts About U.S. Inequality Everyone Should Know.” *Inequality.com*, Stanford Center on Poverty And Inequality, 2011, inequality.stanford.edu/publications/20-facts-about-us-inequality-everyone-should-know.

the Liberal system clearly identified and critiqued in both similar and different ways. However, a clear identification of the roots of discrimination, a clear path to a solution, and the willingness to act I must deduce only comes from the Marxist perspective. In agreement with Marxist thinkers, I believe I have demonstrated that Intersectional solutions to the problems discussed involve mostly observation, but very little in terms of concrete plans to realize a shared “bottom up” approach. On the other hand, the problem with a solely Marxian analysis of contemporary issues is the dogmatic way in which Marxists consider all individual Intersectional considerations as obsolete and divisive leading to further class division.

Therefore, I believe it is crucial and effective for the Marxist movement to embrace the intersectional discourse as a lens in which to better identify and understand individual struggles and by extension the societal problems they experience. Only by understanding and empathizing with an individual’s plight can they truly be incorporated into the class struggle Marxists envision. Modern Marxists must understand that dismissing someone’s Intersectional struggle on a purely ideological basis is just as divisive as the dreaded “Identity” and “Privilege” politics they despise so much. Acknowledgment and acceptance are the first and most essential steps in combining Intersectionality and Marxism, which together are clearly more equipped to view and enact change in modern society than bourgeois Liberal “reform”. Furthermore, I believe that Marxists embracing individuals and viewing topics with an Intersectional lens will not only broaden the Marxist perspective and incorporate more citizens into class struggle but at the same time, it will also give Intersectionalists the clear path to enacting the socialism that so many of its follower’s advocate. Socialism is the common denominator here. It is the goal that I believe can bring and keep together these two movements in this era of ripe opportunities for change.

In Conclusion, as I mentioned socialists and socialist advocating parties within the United States have been growing exponentially, even incorporating “far leftists” and Marxist thinkers into their ranks.²⁷ For the first time in decades we hear the voices of a class movement stirring within the American youth, intellectuals, and even in mainstream party circles.²⁸ I believe now more than ever it is

²⁷ P. Locker “Toward A New Socialist Party” in *Socialist Alternative*, 4 July 2017, www.socialistalternative.org/2017/07/05/dsa-grows-21000-socialist-party/.

²⁸ J. Bustelo “DSA’s Explosive Growth: A Marxist Analysis.” *Medium*, Medium, 15 Aug. 2018, medium.com/@pplswar/dsas-explosive-growth-a-marxist-analysis-cfb89836177b.

time for all discriminated, disadvantaged and forward minded Americans to recognize their common goals and band together in class struggle to demand socialist reform. It is time to bury the dreaded “Identity” and “Privilege” politics that have divided the left and pave the way for a united socialist force against the deceitful vision of Liberal America. Liberalism has been corrupted by wealth and the power it offers, spreading nothing but domestic and international misery to all disadvantaged peoples. Finally, I truly believe, as history has shown us, the only sure way to defeat capital and remedy all the misery it brings is through a united class struggle. A struggle that today has the potential to be fueled by Marxist vigor and honed by Intersectional scopes. Words, observations, ideological dogmatism, petty bourgeois politics, and “I Voted” stickers will never rain down change. Only our unity and actions will bring change ... because change never has and never will, come from above.

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