

SHARE
PHILOSOPHY SHARING FOUNDATION

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SHARE MAGAZINE

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Socialism is back!

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, socialism seemed to have been relegated to the periphery in the philosophical, political, and social debates. In fact, only Cuba and Venezuela nowadays openly proclaim to be socialist states. There is of course China which in spite of retaining its authoritarian state inherent from its communist past has been embracing the values of the free market in its economy. Even in China, immersed in international efforts for a dominant influence on the global spectrum, the diffusion of socialist values is not on top of its agenda.

Ironically, the issue of socialism became topical during the political debates in the last electoral presidential campaign between Donald Trump and Joe Biden. During this campaign, Donald Trump repeatedly portrayed himself as a shield against the dissemination of socialist values which he alleged were being proclaimed by the Democratic Party. A similar approach was adopted by the supporters of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in his last election campaign in 2018.

It is easy to dismiss such political arguments as mere electoral rhetoric that is detached from objective realities. The fact remains that socialism has become a subject of political confrontation whereas it previously formed part of the philosophical political debates on how to improve our societies. Furthermore, the greater the political support the extreme right groups manage to gain, the more radical the extreme left will become.

The Hegelian dialectic explains how a thesis naturally creates its own anti-thesis that generates a synthesis. And such a process keeps going on leading to new developments. Hegel was strongly criticised for seeing this process as inevitable and unavoidable. However cogent this critique may appear to be, Hegel's thesis helps us to comprehend better the social processes of the globalised economy heavily sustained by transnationalism and digitalisation.

It is unfortunate that the deeply polarised political divisions contribute to the prejudicial judgement that tends to create or sustain stereotypes. One can just look towards the measures being adopted to combat the covid-19 pandemic and realise how much they are misguidedly driven by political bias. What should be a simple question of public health ends up becoming a political issue that leads to divergences rather than convergences. Policymakers need to search for the right balance and avoid extreme political stands that benefit one segment of society to the detriment of another. The aim should be to create a new synthesis that is the result of a logical and healthy dialogue between the actors and stakeholders of society. Such a dialogue would hopefully leave little room for manoeuvre among those embracing an extreme political stance.