**[Which ideology?](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870932/which-ideology)**

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OF all the congratulatory messages which poured in from the world’s political leaders when it became clear that Donald Trump had, in the end, quite comfortably [defeated](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870628/resurgent-donald-trumps-kamala) Kamala Harris in the US presidential election, the [tweet](https://x.com/BBhuttoZardari/status/1854061458058817979) by Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari stood out.

The young scion of the PPP called Trump’s victory an [anti-war](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870625/pm-shehbaz-looks-forward-to-working-with-new-us-admin#:~:text=win%20and%20mandate%20%E2%80%9C-,anti%2Dwar,-%E2%80%9D%2C%20Mr%20Bhutto%2DZardari) vote, [reflecting the desire](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870609) of the US electorate for global peace.

The reference was obviously to Palestine and the ongoing Israeli genocide which has been backed unflinchingly by the Biden-Harris administration. But Trump did not win because he is anti-war. [Some voters](https://www.dawn.com/news/1869697) may have punished Harris over Palestine, but the Democratic Party’s [failings](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870548/kamala-harris-made-a-historic-dash-for-the-white-house-heres-why-she-fell-short) extend beyond foreign wars. Bilawal’s pleasantries about a peaceful future for the world were also hyperbole because Trump is anything but a man of peace.

The real quandary is making sense of how Bilawal, who claims to be ‘progressive’, is making common cause with an arch-conservative in Trump.

Let there be no mistake: Trump is not about to dismantle the huge military-industrial complex that undergirds US imperialist power across the world. Among other things, Trump is [firmly committed](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870513/israelis-in-jerusalem-see-trump-return-as-gods-plan) to Zionism, and is unmistakably anti-China.

But it is also not to be understated that Trump has spouted consistent rhetoric about unnecessary spending on [wars abroad](https://www.dawn.com/news/1861572) — his slogan of ‘Make America Great Again’ reflects a relatively insular [vision](https://www.dawn.com/news/1868873) involving less war-making around the world, blocking immigration, and generating industrial jobs by rolling back outsourcing and offshoring.

The far right is tapping into the rage of working people.

The far right thrives on slogans, of course. Trump did not do a lot of things he had claimed he would during his first term. But this is all the more reason for us to think about why certain slogans continue to garner him — and many other similar political leaders — the support that they do. The fact that a far-right Republican leader is able and willing to call for a rollback of America’s foreign wars is an indicator of how muddled the contemporary ideological landscape has become.

Ideological confusion is reaching fever pitch in this country too. Look no further than Bilawal and the PPP — a leader and party that still claims, every once so often, to be committed to [leftist ideals](https://www.dawn.com/news/1803640). When election season rolls around, the slogan ‘*roti, kapra aur makan*’ magically reappears. Even the word ‘[socialism](https://www.dawn.com/2013/02/21/islamic-socialism-a-history-from-left-to-right/)’ sometimes drips off the tongue of PPP leaders. The party also burnishes its other ‘progressive’ credentials like its opposition to the weaponisation of religion and its unparalleled commitment to democracy.

But these claims have virtually no connection to the PPP’s actual politics. At present, the PPP and PML-N are competing to prove their loyalty to the military establishment. The PPP runs the Balochistan government which is presiding over the continuing brutalisation of Baloch youth. A few weeks ago, the Sindh government ordered a [violent crackdown](https://www.dawn.com/news/1864979) against progressives who were protesting the mob lynching of a doctor in Umerkot, Sindh.

Earlier, Ali Wazir — who is now doing rounds in Punjab’s jails — spent months incarcerated under the watch of the Sindh government. And as far as Pakistan’s internal class war is concerned, the PPP makes no bones about the fact that it is far more committed to the IMF, big landed families, real estate moguls and other profiteers than it is to the proverbial worker and peasant.

Let’s take this analogy back to America. The preliminary details about who voted for Trump and Harris are remarkable insofar as they confirm that the Democratic Party — with its comparatively pro-labour history — has largely abandoned the working class, the latter voting in significant numbers for Trump. Even non-white Latino and Black working people [rejected the Democratic Party](https://www.dawn.com/news/1870548/kamala-harris-made-a-historic-dash-for-the-white-house-heres-why-she-fell-short) despite Trump’s persistent anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Once upon a time, to be on the left meant to oppose unbridled capitalist profiteering, imperialist wars and to stand with the lower orders of society. Today, it is the far right that is rhetorically aligning itself with such positions, and successfully tapping into the rage of working people by peddling hate. Meanwhile, the historic social-democratic parties who could once claim to represent the class rage of the lower orders are left only to appeal to a vacuous identity politics and lament the racism and misogyny of the right.

Is there still the possibility of an ideological politics of a left-progressive vintage that reclaims class and imperialism from the hatemongers while also offering meaningful horizons on other pressing matters like the ecological crisis?

We must hold out the hope that there is, but such a politics will only crystallise when the so-called ‘pro­­gressive’ old guard is exposed and displaced by genuinely anti-establishment forces.

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*Published in Dawn, November 8th, 2024*