

The Langtonian.

Issue 9

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Introduction

Starting with a welcome to the first Langtonian of the year. A sectioned issue for this release, from an extensive poetry section pulling all the flavour out of life's rich tapestry to a coalition of politics essays highlighting the right and wrong with our governance and the systems which they dictate.

The above has been filled out with the usual reporting on a diverse mixture of sporting and academic endeavours each hoping to highlight the range of skills in exhibition across the school.

This leaves me with thank yous to both parties, the writers and the readers.

To anyone and everyone who wishes to submit a piece, we can only assure you that the regret of not submitting it will outweigh any embarrassment you may feel from sharing your work.

Finally, to the readers, for making this all happen, I thank you for reading this publication and spurring all our writers forward.

The Editorial Team

Stem

'The Physics trip to the Emmanuel Centre' by Rufus Southgate

Starting with an extended train ride up and into London, the physics in action trip was a full day of learning how physics we all learn fits into our everyday lives. Once they had arrived at the Emmanuel centre itself the trip's programme of talks would begin; from grounded material physics to that pressing horizon of space science, almost everything you could wish for was covered.

Significant remark should be reserved for the talk on the physics of rollercoasters, as I hear it referred to as the best talk of the day. It highlighted how minor physical changes in the design of the coaster can drastically alter the magnitude of the forces experienced by the riders. This completely shifted the perspective of some of the attendees to the talk. From seeing rollercoasters as a large, complicated machine to a series of small carefully chosen components. Each presented had their own

distinct styles, from their own research stories to examples plucked from everyday life. This only highlighted the diverse range of topics on presentation. In summary the day has been described as a brilliant experience illustrating the wide variety how physics is used in careers and research.

Sport

'Match Report: EKFA Girls vs The Marsh Academy' by Lyla Jenkins

Date: Wednesday 4th December
Venue: The Langton
Final Score: 0-1

EKFA (East Kent Football Academy) Girls played their first home game of the season this week, with a hard-fought defeat to Marsh Academy. The game was tense throughout, with EKFA displaying strong and organised defending with excellent team-work, despite this being only their second game as a unit.

The opening stages of the game were evenly contested, with both teams displaying a mixture of strong attacking

combinations and defensive solidarity, in order to settle into possession. EKFA remained strong at the back throughout, due to a disciplined shape from defenders Erin, Lana, Emily and Jess, who were successful in limiting the opposition's shots at goal, turning possession to the attacking force of Nat, Layla and Bobbie, who were gifted a few close chances during the first half.

The game remained tense into the second half, with both teams battling strongly for every ball for a chance to progress to the next round of the cup. The EKFA defence managed to silence the Marsh attackers for the majority of the latter half, allowing the composed midfield of Zara and Grace to create chances for the attacking line, who were unlucky not to score.

With minutes remaining of the hard-fought contest, a controversial spate of refereeing decisions saw defender Skye booked for dissent and a penalty awarded to Marsh Academy. EKFA strongly disputed the decision, but players remained sportsmanlike as Marsh converted their penalty to take the win in the dying minutes. With little time left to equalise, EKFA battled until the final whistle, and came away with a performance to be proud of.

Following the game, EKFA captain Erin Crossley shared her reflections: "I think we all had a really positive mindset going into the match which was reflected in how we played. In terms of the number of chances created we were way ahead of them, at times I think we should have switched play to utilise the left wing more. Up until the last minute everyone was hungry for the win; if it wasn't for a dodgy decision from the ref at the last minute we would have come out on top, for sure. All in all, I am really

pleased with our progression as a team in matches and training. Lots of promise and areas to work on. Going into next week's away match I think we have it all to play for and then heads turn to next year's fixtures!"

'Why Cities Still Fund Stadiums Despite the Economics and Politics Behind it?' by Noah Slater

When a city announces new plans for a professional sports stadium, the script is often predictable: promises of economic revitalisation, job creation, and bustling new entertainment districts and overall regeneration of the area around. Yet, decades of independent research, from economists across the political spectrum around the world, demonstrates that publicly funded stadiums rarely deliver the financial returns which were once advertised by investors. Despite this, cities continue to approve them, sometimes while simultaneously cutting public services or raising taxes. If the economics are so weak, why do these deals keep happening? Most stadium deals follow a familiar pattern. Teams request substantial public subsidies such as tax breaks, infrastructure upgrades, or even direct cash. In exchange, the city is told it will gain increased tourism, new jobs, and long-term revenue growth etc. The empirical evidence paints a different picture which is, ultimately, that stadiums typically shuffle spending around rather than generating new economic activity, and the new jobs created tend to be low-wage, seasonal, and dependent on event schedules. This disconnect sets up a larger, more revealing question. If

stadiums don't make financial sense, what political forces really keep the money flowing?

One explanation lies in the structure of political incentives. Mayors and city council members often operate on short electoral timelines and are drawn to projects with immediate, visible impact. A gleaming new arena is a tangible achievement, something that can be photographed, ribbon-cut, and campaigned on long before the next election. By contrast, investments with higher economic returns, like sewer upgrades, public transit, or school repairs are expensive, slow, ugly and rarely headline-grabbing. Politicians also fear the reputational cost of losing a team. Even if a relocation threat is exaggerated, no official wants their legacy to include the departure of a major franchise. Therefore, it is evident to see that many members of the council want to look good and take all the glory. When the financial reports come back red, they have already been voted out, and the problem is not theirs. Stadium politics also reflect a classic political economic dynamic: concentrated benefits and diffuse costs. Team owners, developers, and construction unions form a powerful and organised coalition pushing for subsidies. They have money, lobbyists, and their own public relations machinery. Meanwhile, the people who pay for stadiums, ordinary residents, are numerous but uncoordinated. No individual taxpayer loses enough money to mobilise a dedicated opposition movement but, the collective total can amount to hundreds of millions of pounds. An example of this is the 'KC Stadium' in Hull, which was built around 2002, this stadium reportedly cost around £44 million yet roughly £42 million of which came from the city itself (via public funds). This suggests

taxpayers in Hull helped pay for that stadium build which is a clear case of a local authority stepping in to finance a sports venue when needed.

Another force sustaining stadium subsidies is the power of narrative. Teams frame stadiums as civic symbols, generators of pride, and markers of a "world-class city." Emotional appeals often overpower dry economic data, especially when local media outlets amplify revitalisation rhetoric or rely heavily on team access for sports coverage. In many cities, the cultural and emotional value of a team helps shield owners from scrutiny over their public funding requests.

In all fairness, some stadium projects are embedded within broader redevelopment strategies that can yield real benefits, when they are paired with transit access, walkable mixed-use zoning, pedestrian-friendly design, and meaningful private investment. These cases are rare, showing that stadiums aren't inherently wasteful, but they are simply too often pursued as isolated prestige projects rather than components of cohesive planning.

Ultimately, stadium subsidies persist not because the economics support them but because the political incentives do. Unless cities adopt stronger transparency rules, independent cost-benefit reviews, or voter-approved referenda for large subsidies, stadium deals will remain driven by power, perception, and pressure, not by evidence.

Music

'Down is the New Up: An Insight into Radiohead's Political Controversy' by Elliot Dixon

Radiohead have recently embarked on their first tour in seven years and while many, including myself, are celebrating their return, some have also called for the group to be boycotted, citing the political issues the band finds itself surrounded by. To properly understand why, we have to dive back through the band's history.

In 1993, Radiohead released their debut album Pablo Honey. Although its lead single, Creep, is now famous worldwide, it initially took some time for the album, and the song in particular, to take off. The first place that Creep ever hit number one in any charts was in Israel and, as a result of this, Israel has always been a destination that the group goes when on tour. They have been closely linked with the country ever since.

The band has been noted for working with a wide range of Israeli artists, especially Johnny

Greenwood, Radiohead's lead guitarist, who collaborated with the Israeli songwriters Shye Ben Tzur and Dudu Tassa, in 2015 and 2023 respectively, with whom he wrote albums. Johnny is also married to an Israeli woman, whom he met whilst on tour in Israel in 1993. Arguably the political controversy surrounds Greenwood himself as much as it does the group on a whole. With the

ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, Radiohead have been unwillingly thrown into the political conundrum that is Gaza, and many have demanded to hear a statement from them on the issue, given their connection with Israel. However, a response is not what we got. In fact, Radiohead responded to the pressure by making no public statements on the matter for many years. This is quite uncharacteristic for the band as they have never shied away from being politically controversial. Many of their songs have political messages or themes, such as 'Burn the Witch' (2016), '2 + 2 = 5' (2003), and 'Down is the New Up' (2007). Their 2003 Album in particular, Hail to the Thief, is packed with criticism of the Iraq war, dishonest leaders, and a variety of other socio-political issues.

"Maybe you'll be President, and know right from wrong" – Sail to the Moon (2003)

Their silence on the matter, for better or for worse, has been interpreted as a pro-Israel stance by the media. Many felt that the band's personal ties to Israel had blinded them to what was happening in Gaza. Thom Yorke was on a solo tour last year, where a disgruntled concert-goer shouted during his show in Melbourne: 'How many dead children will it take for you to condemn the genocide in Gaza?'

Thom's response to this was to insult the man, before walking off stage, though he did return after a few minutes to finish his set.

Yorke's response was interpreted as a confirmation of his perceived pro-Israel stance and, up until very recently, this was assumed to be his, and to a larger extent the band's position. The whole affair left a bitter taste in the mouths of many fans, as this revelation seemed to be

ripped from the band unwillingly. Greenwood has faced similar challenges to his perceived views. Earlier this year, concerts in London with his Israeli collaborator Dudu Tassa had to be cancelled after there were significant safety concerns surrounding pro-Palestine protesters. Many have also called for similar action to be taken against the band, rather than just Johnny. It was only after this that the silence was finally broken. Yorke released a statement in May of this year, which said the following: 'I think Netanyahu and his crew of extremists are totally out of control and need to be stopped, and that the international community should put all the pressure it can on them to cease. Their excuse of self-defence has long since worn thin and has been replaced by a transparent desire to take control of Gaza and the West Bank permanently...'

This came as a welcome surprise to many fans and completely contradicted previous notions about the band's political position on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Yorke gave further statements as the long-awaited Europe tour approached.

'I wouldn't want to be 5,000 miles anywhere near the Netanyahu regime'. Greenwood has been less damning in his statements, though still criticising Israel, saying that: 'Silencing artists for being born Jewish in Israel doesn't seem like any way to reach an understanding between the two sides in this apparently endless conflict'.

Despite this clarification, many protest groups, such as the BDS, and a variety of other activists and public figures still condemn Radiohead for their complacency and call for the band to be boycotted, though the number has dwindled since these statements were released. Ultimately, Radiohead's

relationship with the conflict in Israel seems to largely have been their own fault, not in the sense that Greenwood's marrying an Israeli woman or doing shows in Israel is really their fault, but their lack of clarity on the issue certainly is. This prompts the question: why didn't they clarify their standpoint earlier? For what it's worth, I believe that they wanted to do whatever they thought was best for the people and were concerned that making a public statement would only fan the flames of a fire that should best be left to burn out. Maybe we all should have listened when Yorke said:

'I'm a reasonable man, get off my case' – Packt like Sardines in a Crushd Tin Box (2001)

Regardless, they have finally clarified their position. Hopefully, the band can put all this drama and uncertainty behind them, continuing to craft

their timeless music that has been enjoyed and cherished by millions around the globe since 1992.

Politics

Centrism — Is the art of compromise the missing link in modern politics? By Hugo Fassum

Modern history is brimming with political theory and theorists, from Edmund Burke to Karl Marx, Carl Schmitt to John Rawls. Many of them build their arguments on strong ideological foundations, suggesting that the opposites to their beliefs are incorrect, and have no rationale nor are morally

righteous. Whatever you may think of Marx or Burke, they do not always offer enough balance in their arguments, which detracts from their potency. Any political work that truly considers the range of opinion and benefits of both sides immediately carries more weight. And so, a question is raised as to why more central views are so under-explored and treated as though they are merely a sign of a lack of conviction?

The answers here lie in how loosely defined centrism is as a political entity. Yet, ironically, the ambiguity is the magic charm of centrism. Why brand yourself with an ideology to the extent that you are forced to conform fully to it even when you have doubts? The nature of humanity and our individuality is that we never completely match the views of another person, and that our ideas will shift and change over time. Rather, in modern politics, there is a 'with us or against us' approach, and a polarising divide between 'left wing' and 'right wing', despite many people sitting unknowingly in the middle ground. The misconception that accepting the merits of multiple political philosophies means you are indecisive, and even lacking understanding, ought to be dispelled. Why on earth would such a variety of opinions even exist if all the answers were so obvious?

-Perhaps what centrism really stands for is the ability to step back and see the possibility of compromise, being able to accept elements of opposing views. Another widespread idea is that compromise does not work because a commitment must be made to one way of doing things or another. Yet, the historical evidence would suggest otherwise. Communist China has thrived economically by embracing forms of capitalism - private ownership and a range of market mechanisms leading

to billionaires in what should be a classless society. Even if China manages to shift towards the Marxist-Leninist utopia, it has compromised the political spectrum to approach an end goal. In the UK, New Labour undertook privatisation of NATS and British Energy, while the succeeding Conservatives nationalised several railway franchises, demonstrating why, when the context requires, parties need the flexibility to enact policy that contradicts ideologically.

This means that there is a strong case to believe that adopting policies that straddle the left-right divide and having the sense to abandon idealistic plans if the situation changes is, and would be, a sensible and effective way of approaching politics, particularly in the UK. Rather than see an opposition to your view as an enemy of humanity, we should learn to see the shared ground, whether in the means or in the end goal, understanding the contrasting beliefs in order to build a more appropriate stance with stronger balance. However, compromise may not be the whole answer, with the ability to pursue an ideological policy approach while considering the possibilities of other routes as a much needed missing link. Then, that approach can be adjusted and reactive to public response and policy success. Adopting forms of centrism gives the flexibility to govern based on practicality, not on idealism. In the UK, the governments in the past, whether Labour or Conservative, have been limited by being confined to the ideas of their area of the political spectrum, rather than governing based on which ideas work best in the current context.

Although a centrist mindset brings the capacity to evolve and grow, it also means there is less uniformity and consistency. Perhaps this is

why it cannot be presented in the same logical style as Marx's socialism, and therefore why more extreme ideas have been so recognised by writers and theorists. It seems illogical that there has been less advocacy for more moderate ideas, even when they have a better track record. This may be due to how the controversial, combative features of Marx and Burke entice the general public, whereas neutral voices do not have the same controversy to gain recognition. Moreover, the lack of a single, underlying message removes the weight of arguing we should adjust our politics based on the situation. That is why misconceptions of centrists, being short of conviction, are perpetuated.

Centrism and the art of compromise suggests that the 'middle way' of politics is a new idea - it is not. British politics has become far more polarised over the past decades. The 1970s witnessed far more prevalent centrism than we have today. The Conservative party, with many One-Nation Tories, had yet to be driven further right by Thatcher. And, the prospect of Jeremy Corbyn leading the Labour party would have seemed radical to Jim Callaghan and Neil Kinnock. However, centrism was never used as a brand, because it does not necessarily hold voter appeal. After Thatcher, many issues have been blamed on her radical right-wing politics, although, it is not necessarily the right-wing elements that the UK struggled to adjust to, but rather the radicalism. This fits with a picture of abject far-left and far-right failures across the globe, often only surviving through authoritarianism. Straying too far from the practical centre into the idealist extremes threatens democracy. So, we should judge our politicians on their competence and not assume that staying less radical

explains their shortcomings. The latter drove the rise of the Nazis and is now driving the rise of Reform. All said, many extreme views are not always totally unrealistic, it's just that they have no consideration for alternatives. Nor is this a condemnation of being strongly left or right-wing, just a reminder that centrism and compromise can teach some lessons about practicality.

However, despite the presence of extremism, the current relevance of centrism stems from the fact that there is, arguably, a centrist as our current prime minister. These same ideas about myths over lack of conviction and seeming inconsistency persist though, because Starmer's relative shortfall in popularity could be attributed to the failure to satisfy either side of the more divided political spectrum in the UK. Though there are other equally important factors, such as his reasonably limited communication abilities, that fall far short of those exercised by Thatcher and Blair that underpinned their success, Starmer represents some of the issues with centrism in Britain that have been described. His Commons defeat over welfare is one example of the limited space afforded when the opposition are likely to vote against you and when some of your party, for Keir that being those potentially further left, also oppose the bill on ideological grounds. Therefore, the problems mentioned over why compromise can struggle to flourish and appear effective publicly are being demonstrated right now. Starmer's future as Prime Minister and Labour leader may end up answering many questions about the place centrism has in our modern society.

So, whether this be seen as an advocacy for centrism and compromise, a warning against extremism and

polarisation a plea for understanding and respect, hopefully we can reconsider what the political spectrum really looks like, and where most people sit on it. Sometimes, a political view is not necessary for a message to be conveyed. Maybe it is time to take a step back from left-right ideology and to look at our principles and how they apply to each unique situation that politics presents us with daily, with a view to common sense and practicality. Otherwise, nuance and the art of compromise will be lost.

The Rise of Reform UK and the Dangers of the Far-Right to British Politics by Finley Golder-Haves

Reform UK is a right wing, populist party which emerged in 2021 under leader Nigel Farage after being rebranded from 'the Brexit party.' Whilst many argue that Reform should not be considered a 'far-right' party, there is a convincing case for placing them in this bracket. 'Far-right' typically is defined as political ideologies that are positioned at the end of the right-wing spectrum, characterised by values such as ultra-nationalism, authoritarian leadership, strong anti-immigration views and the belief of preserving 'traditional' national culture. Many of Reform's messages and policies align with these traits, and its presence is kickstarting a shift to the right in British politics, promoting divisive and hateful rhetoric.

Many reasons can be attributed to causing the rise in popularity and backing for

the party, the main reason being the collapse of trust in the Conservative and Labour parties which, for virtually all British political history, have been the components of a two-horse political race. This is due to the Conservative's mishandling of Brexit as well as the Partygate scandal which has greatly affected trust in the ability of the party. For Labour, it is mostly due to the current government under Keir Starmer, which the media and many others believe is ineffective and unsuccessful, creating a hole in politics which Reform have been able to exploit. The populist messages that Farage promotes is a reason for their success. He speaks out on, and targets, areas where the current Labour government are struggling, offering oversimplified solutions to extremely complex issues, which can appeal to voters who do not feel connected to any other parties. This leads to support as people believe Farage, and Reform, will fix these problems easily. Furthermore, he promotes anti-elite and an Us VS Them mindset to create a divide between the working class and elites, painting himself as on the side of the 'people', despite him and many others in his party being elites themselves, with Farage coming from a wealthy family and being privately educated.

Secondly, their policy areas are driving their success due to their hard and simple approach to many issues demonstrated in their stance on immigration- 'Stop the Boats.' This has resonated with many voters who feel that this a large issue in the UK, particularly with the economic issues and pressure on public services currently. Additionally, their policies on economic populism, containing lower taxes and simple reforms, as well as anti-net zero and their 'war on wokeness' resonate with older and more culturally conservative voters. All these

factors have contributed to Reform's rise in support, resulting in their current lead in the polls.

These policy areas only offer unrealistic solutions because a complex problem never has a simple solution. For example, Reform will be unable to 'Stop the Boats' effectively mainly as all their hardline stances would violate international law (e.g. The ECHR and The Refugee Convention). Abolishing these laws would take time and be largely controversial, therefore making it hard to pass through parliament. Secondly, migration cannot be controlled without cooperation from France. Reform says they will not pay France and will take an adversarial approach. Therefore, Reform has no effective proposal to 'Stop the Boats' as their lack of cooperation with France, along with France's refusal to accept pushed-back boats who have already crossed the channel, ultimately render their immigration proposals to be useless. Reform do not describe themselves as far-right, stating that the real far-right are Tommy Robinson and his supporters. However, it is more likely that Reform is attempting to shy away from far-right claims due to the negative connotations that surround them. The far-right contains features such as extreme nationalism, authoritarianism, anti-immigration, populism, opposing liberal values and conspiracy-driven politics. When judged against these categories, it can be easily argued how Reform fits into many of them. Reform is built on their anti-immigration rhetoric, strict border control policies and populist ideas; they frame politics as the People vs The Elites. They promote conspiracy politics and extreme nationalism by scapegoating asylum seekers, migrants and Muslims as the root of problems in Britain and as a threat to British identity. Overall, there is a

much larger case for arguing that Reform fits into this category of 'far-right', Tommy Robinson and his supporters being further along the spectrum. The key difference is Reform are cultural nationalists whereas Robinson is ethno-nationalist, meaning Reform defines the nation by a shared culture and not by race as Tommy Robinson does. Although this viewpoint allows for integration into the nation, it still alienates people such as asylum seekers, migrants and ethnic minorities who are not 'culturally British' due to their different backgrounds and/or faiths.

The danger of the far-right on British politics, and the UK as a country, should not be ignored and is a large factor that can, and is, currently affecting the country as we know it. The alienation of asylum seekers, migrants and many others living in Britain as being not 'British' is unacceptable. An image is portrayed that ethnic minorities and immigrants are enemies to British culture, increasing social division which undermines Britain as a multicultural state. This view is ironic as many of the asylum seekers that are being portrayed in this way are fleeing wars and crises in areas where Britain has been involved militarily. These people are framed as being responsible for crime, the decline of public services and cultural erosion. This can easily lead to increased hate crime, forcing individuals to more extreme ideologies. Over time, these extreme views can become normalised and language that was once considered hateful will become ordinary. Policies that once seemed ridiculous will have increased legitimacy. Furthermore, the support of the far-right may force other parties like Tories and Labour to adopt righter wing policies to win back voters and fit in with a new political norm. This may drag

the centre rightwards and overtime reduce the credibility of other sides of politics which are not right sided.

The increased backing of the far-right poses serious risks to the democratic process and to equality in the UK with it catalysing polarisation and extremism. If they are left unchallenged, and without proper scrutiny, their threats go far further than a new government. Their damaging rhetoric, verbal attacks on minorities and challenges to rights and democratic norms weaken the stability and reliability of British politics.

'The left is getting organised - what does this mean for UK politics?' by Caspar Such

Big changes are taking place in our country's politics. Farage's far right Reform UK has swept ahead in opinion polls, but now two left-wing parties have emerged to challenge him. Do either of these have what it takes to act as effective opposition at the next general election?

In Keir Starmer's first year as Prime Minister, he failed to win his country's trust. Despite initial celebration amongst left-leaning voters, moods quickly turned sour as Labour failed to follow up on their manifesto promises. Labour's rightwards shift under Starmer has left a vacancy for a truly left-wing party in British politics. Meanwhile, the rise of xenophobic and nationalist rhetoric on social media has led Reform to overtake Labour as the country's most popular party. Labour's failure to combat the far right has left many voters feeling

disillusioned, and two more radical groups have taken it upon themselves to address this...

In July, former Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana announced the formation of a new "genuinely democratic socialist party" which they promise will prioritise mass wealth redistribution, nationalisation of privately-owned assets, and large investments into social housing. They have support from the Independent Alliance, a group of several socialist MPs who are critical of Labour, and they hope to convince members of the Socialist Campaign Group, a left-wing faction within Labour, to defect. If MPs from both groups joined, a best-case scenario could see their group reach as many as 25 MPs sitting in the Commons. At the end of November, they held their founding conference, where they voted to adopt their provisional name of 'Your Party'.

However, its chances of success have been significantly reduced by incessant infighting and scandals since its founding. Factions have broken out as a result of disagreements over how and when to launch the party. This has led several key figures to withdraw their support.

Independent Alliance MPs Adnan Hussain and Iqbal Mohamed stopped backing the party citing a toxic culture towards male Muslim members, whilst Sultana labelled the Independent Alliance a "sexist boys' club". Hussain had previously caused conflict over the role of social conservatism in the party. It seems the proto party is barely managing to pinpoint ideological positions, let alone a coherent strategy.

Corbyn and Sultana have also clashed, first over funding for the party: Sultana currently holds over £1. million of

factor donations which she collected via a separate membership portal to Corbyn's. On top of this, Sultana refused to show up on the first day of the conference, in solidarity with members of the Socialist Workers Party who weren't allowed to enter. One saving grace is that, at the conference, members narrowly voted against having a single leader, in favour of a panel of non-politicians. This avoided the risk of a leadership race between Corbyn and Sultana which could have made the rifts between them, and the party's factions, irreparable. Despite this small positive move, Your Party's first steps as a fledgling party have been a disaster. To make matters worse, a rival threat is now challenging them.

Unlike Your Party, the Green Party has existed in some form for over 50 years. However, this year has marked unprecedented success for them after electing Zack Polanski as their new leader in September. A self-styled "eco-populist", Polanski aims to give Reform a taste of their own medicine by using the same tactics to spread "politics of hope", rather than "politics of despair". Their aims are largely similar to Your Party's, with, of course, a greater emphasis on environmental policies. It seems the main reason why Green has had more success over the same period of time is how they are spreading their message. Polanski's charismatic personality helped lead his party to a record number of members. Over 100,000 have joined, making them the third largest party in the country. In contrast, Your Party has only a third of these numbers. A recent opinion poll showed Green is now neck and neck with Labour, and their numbers are only continuing to rise. If these numbers are to be trusted, even Keir Starmer's own seat of Holborn and St Pancras is at risk at the next election - and

Polanski himself has suggested he could stand there.

Polanski appears to be a more polarising figure than previous Green Party leaders. Green appears to be a party of two halves: young left-wing voters in cities, who want radical change to how our country is run, and more moderate voters in rural constituencies, attracted by Green's founding environmentalist principles. Polanski appeals far more to the former, and opinion polls show this, with Green currently projected to make gains in university cities across the country. However, this could be at the expense of constituencies such as Waveney Valley and North Herefordshire, which they gained from the Conservatives at the last general election. This group of voters may be put off by Polanski's radical views and populist methods. Senior Green Party figures, such as former leader Caroline Lucas, supported his opponents in this year's leadership contest, further evidence that he may risk alienating some of his party's original support base. Given the vast increase in support for Green, this is unlikely to cause him a problem. Indeed, he won the leadership contest with a landslide 85% of votes. But the cult of personality he is creating could present a potential long-term threat to the party.

Right now, it seems the Greens have a huge advantage over Your Party. Only 12% of UK voters say they would consider voting for Your Party, down from 18% in July. Of these 12%, 85% would also consider voting Green. On the other hand, Green now has the backing of 18% of the public, even higher than Labour at 14%. However, there is still time for Your Party to get their act together. They have until 2029 to shake off their disastrous start and prove to voters that they are

capable of being a driving force in British politics. So far, they have unwittingly presented themselves as a laughingstock, so their focus should therefore be on increasing their positive publicity. Unlike Green, and their right-wing counterpart Reform, Your Party is yet to feature frequently on programs such as the BBC's Question

Time, where they can propagate their messages. Meanwhile, Green risks becoming more the 'Zack Polanski Party' than the Green Party. This is certainly one area which Your Party can exploit, by making the point that it may not be wise for them to place the fate of their party in one polarising individual. Due to their unique form of leadership, this issue will not be present for Your Party. However, a charismatic leader with loud and upbeat messages is dynamite when it comes to boosting vote share, and this is something which Your Party lacks. It will surely take a huge effort for them to haul themselves back onto the same level as the Greens.

For left-wing voters, the main priority at the 2029 election will be to beat Reform: the problem is the vast range of choice. Neither Green nor Your Party have ruled out an electoral pact, but Labour will continue to bring in a large number of votes, especially if they enter the election with a new leader. Starmer has disappointed voters, but there are others waiting to take his place, with Wes Streeting, Shabana Mahmood and Andy Burnham tipped as favourites. The threat that Labour faces from Green and Your Party is not their total disappearance, but a potential three-way division of their 2024 vote share, which will hand

Farage the key to 10 Downing Street on a plate. It is up to Labour to quell the threat from the left. Labour needs to

take heed of rising socialist sentiment to win back the votes which won them a landslide in 2024. If they do not, they are digging their own grave, and Polanski, Corbyn and Sultana are poised to place the tombstone on top.

Poetry

'My Nation is Compost' By Hayden Stokes

My nation reformed
In white paper chains,
Borders chant "united",
Watchtowers catalogue our names.
My nation is a white knight,
Armour polished, conscience optional,
Impounding aliens in
Cells stacked like statutes.
My nation scrawls democratic letters,
Stamped and carved in the flesh of worn-down paper-
"Rwanda is not that far away."
My nation is my father,
As margins scrape against my toes,
He counts my wounds as blessings
And basks in my glory.
My nation is a cannibal,
Gnawing at its roots.
We stamp our feet on crumbling streets,
And green tendrils pierce from stone.
The politics is compost

'Poor Old Ireland' by Edward Robb

The lines were drawn by them,
Yet they were so far from home,
The British hierarchy claimed it as their own
Blood and tears every night,
This only meant the Bhoys had to fight
Internment was cast without a trial,
Union jacks seen at every mile
Policy and polity pushed by a distant hand
Yet they continued to ignore the meaning behind the land
Thoughtless, careless and selfish,
The real landowners' lives were made hellish
Power-hungry and loyal to the crown,
Yet still somehow so disloyal,
They claimed all their rule and kept peace in hand,
Although the peace continued to grow thin in poor old Ireland,
How can peace be found
When distant hands rule the land?

By Viviana-tania Raggi

In school, they taught us
you can be anything you want to be.
That changes the moment
you step into Parliament.

Maybe I don't want to be
the Gender Equality minister,
or pushed into Child Affairs
purely because I can produce life.

Maybe I want real power,
the kind reserved for the cabinet rooms
where decisions and changes are made.
Power that isn't handed out like charity
boxed with a bow saying "suitable"
for people like me.

Maybe I don't I want to be looked down on
every male Prime Minister before me staring from the walls
like I'm a stranger who doesn't belong.
And the women they use as warnings
They're failures thrown at us over and over again.
"We don't want another Margaret Thatcher.
Keep the women at home."
That's what they think when someone like me tries to run for PM.

Maybe that's the truth no one says aloud
Parliament was shaped by men who guard the door

Loud in their thoughts and relentless commands
But it's the women who are fewer and underestimated
who are pushed to the edges.
While they debate we rebuild
While they have "loyalty" we transform it
Maybe that's why the future looks more like us
then it ever did them.

By Grace Phillpott

Green, white and purple in 1903
The day the unions fire awakened me.
With banners flying high and proud
At last, women's voices shall be loud.

A ballot box, a sacred trust,
Injustice cracked and reclaimed by us.
From silent hope and rally cries,
The dream of freedom will never die.

With pains of hunger and prison walls,
We stand united as justice calls.
No longer silent, no longer small,
Together we stand as we shout, "Votes
for all!"

The vote as a gift for the girls yet to be,
And promise of courage and liberty.

**'Upon That Cobbled Plinth He Would Stand...' an extract from the
collection of 'Stranger Men Than I' by Hannah Sharp**

Upon that cobbled plinth he would stand, still,
Became of the very stone upon which he stood.
That ashen rock, clothed with silted moss,
And cracked from whence the water ran across,
Shouted he his plight of barren waste,
His sermon, unto those people to whom he preached.
Then, like Death, cloaked, he drew upon himself
So ghostly eyes over red-rimmed ridges he would peer
And black coal across his eye's lids he would smear.
This man, alone in the world bar his addled mind
Then, like Death, would mutter accursed swears
And sneak from neath the alley behind. Emerge
Victorious with rain dripping from his matted locks.
He spoke with Death's voice, a muttered song
Whose words would blacken every echoed street
From the mid-autumn rain to the cold winter's sleet.
One eve, the gusts from beneath the city blew,
And marched the gates from the North wind's lungs.
The clouds collapsed upon our city's cultured sky
And broke forth the boomed thundered cry.
Our gutters burst. Our streets refused their continents.
And yet, upon that cobbled plinth stood he,
Arresting the winds that shook our merry sea
To churn ungrateful fog upon our line
And come, that hour, for the city's bells to chime.
Breaking forth from purpled bruised
Clouds spread God's white entrails.
And we saw Death.
Death who stood upon a wreckaged
And cobbled pillar. Death who stood
Upon the aged stones of elder years.
Death who stood no more.
One mighty peal echoed from the bells,
One mighty peal answered from the storm.
Lightning reined no more.
Left isolate, desolate, in the Northern gusts;
A greyed lock, a red-rimmed eye, and a singed
Cloak we once called Death's.

THANK YOU FOR READING!

A Warning to Candidates

We are committed to measuring you
For three hours straight
No matter how quickly you write.
We are committed to measuring you
And putting you in a box with a letter
By which you will be known for all time.
We are committed to assessing you and
Standing by the grade we give
No matter how poorly we perform in this
matter.

You are strictly forbidden to think.

You have three hours to prove your worth.
You may show your workings
But only the approved kind.
We are committed to measuring you
Regardless of how you feel
Or where your head is
Or whether your hamster died this morning.
Or whether the invigilators
Have squeaky shoes.
Measuring is not feeling.
This is the opposite of feeling.
Nothing here will be kind.

Thinking *ist verboten*.

Thinking leads to doubt.
Doubt leads to crossing out.
This is strictly forbidden.
You will fit yourself into what is required.
The assessment will have objectives
And the objectives will be assessed.
We prefer the clean lie
To the messy truth
Thank you very much.
Choice is not permitted and
The outcome is always fixed.
And when you leave you must begin
Revising for the next occasion
On which being human must be simplified.

Stop thinking.

You have three hours not to live.
Salute the mark scheme before you
commence.
You may turn your paper over and begin.

Anon.