

Zack Polanski's Greens are no alternative to Your Party's debacle

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14 November 2025

The Green Party under Zack Polanski has rapidly become Britain's largest left-wing opposition to the Labour Party, outstripping Jeremy Corbyn's Your Party at this stage.

Polanski won this year's party leadership election by a landslide (84 percent of the vote). Since then, membership of the Greens has more than doubled from roughly 65,000 to over 150,000—making it the third largest party in the UK after Labour and Reform. In contrast Your Party recently announced 50,000 members.

New enthusiasm for the Greens has been driven by Polanski's self-described “eco-populism” tied to effective media campaigning. He has called for a wealth tax and abolishing landlords, acknowledged the Israeli campaign in Gaza as a genocide, questioned British membership of NATO, called out the “creep of fascism” represented by Reform and opposed Labour's anti-migrant rhetoric.

There are strong echoes of Zohran Mamdani in New York City. Like Mamdani's election as mayor, Polanski's rise to Green Party leader, and in the polls, reflects a surge of left-wing sentiment looking for a home under conditions in which Keir Starmer's Labour Party is an utterly discredited right-wing monstrosity.

That the Green Party has been able to play this role is down to the failings of Corbynism more than the virtues of Polanski and the Greens.

With every passing horror of the Starmer government, the lack of a left opposition party was becoming more and more untenable. The political milieu around Corbyn, many ejected from the Labour Party, was crying out for a new home, and popular sentiment was way to the left of the Corbynites and looking for somewhere to place its sympathies. But Corbyn himself refused to move, still longing for a return to Labour's backbenches, or for a quiet retirement heading his Peace and Justice initiative.

There has for decades been a tendency among the Stalinists and sections of the pseudo-left groups,—especially during Labour's rightward lurch under Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and then Ed Miliband—advocating “deep entry” into the Green Party, with its more liberal milieu, to transform it into an “eco-socialist” party. This began to re-emerge after going dormant during Corbyn's Labour leadership.

Media “lefts” like Owen Jones and individuals associated with Novara Media raised the banner of a left-wing Green Party as the means of challenging Starmer.

By the time Corbyn was finally bounced by his would-be co-leader Zarah Sultana into launching Your Party this July, Polanski had already stolen a march, using his leadership campaign to pitch the Greens as a ready-made solution for homeless left sentiment. The continual crisis of Your Party since has allowed him to keep on marching. The *New Statesman* commented this week, “Zack Polanski will be the most powerful man on the left and Your Party only have themselves to blame.”

Like Corbyn and Mamdani, however, Polanski and the Green Party offers no solution to the political challenges facing the working class and young people.

Zack Polanski's record

Polanski's recent resort to radical rhetoric does not write off either his party's or his own history, including their very recent history.

Polanski joined the Liberal Democrats in 2015, standing as a candidate for local government and remaining a member until 2017. Not only was this during the first two years of Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party, it was *after* the Liberal Democrats had imposed a crushing austerity programme for five years—from 2010—in coalition with the Conservatives. He then joined the Greens in 2017, explaining in 2018 that being a “pro-Europe Jew” were “two reasons I couldn't vote for Labour under Jeremy Corbyn”.

He fully embraced the “antisemitism” slander campaign waged against Corbyn—and above all his supporters in Labour's membership—by the Blairites, Tories, the Zionist establishment, the Israeli and US governments. He has been unapologetic about this, telling *Novara Media* recently, “What did I have at the time to go on as evidence as a Jewish person? I had the leader themselves saying ‘I have antisemitism in my party’,” using Corbyn's capitulation to justify his own.

His being “pro-Europe” references Polanski's support for the European Union—a tool of European capitalism, imperialism and anti-migrant violence. He has held firm to this view, explaining this October, “Over [the] longer term, absolutely we should be rejoining the European Union,” arguing that while “there's some really worrying trends across Europe, particularly around the far-right” the Greens' role was “working with left-wing or progressive movements across Europe in ways that look to reform Europe”.

Polanski's embrace of the EU also underpins his attitude to NATO. His opposition to the alliance during the leadership campaign was based entirely on concerns over Donald Trump's America First agenda. He told *Byline Times* that the Greens' NATO policy was “out of date” and that NATO “has got a lot more complex since Donald Trump has become President, and I don't think anyone should consider him a reliable ally... I think the age of NATO is now fully over.”

Aside from the free pass given to NATO's previous 75 bloodstained years, Polanski's definition of “fully over” is a flexible one. Since becoming Green Party leader, he has told *Sky News* that what he's calling for “is not a withdrawal straight away, but actually to begin conversations and dialogues with our European partners about what does an alternative look like.” In other words, he seeks a new military alliance allowing European imperialism greater independence from American imperialism.

Amid a fierce global trade war and rapid militarisation, arising out of a systemic economic crisis and necessitating a wholesale attack on social spending and workers' living standards, these positions belie anything Polanski says about ending the social crisis.

The Green Party's record

The Green Party abandoned its previous “opposition” to NATO—of the same kind as Polanski now advocates—in 2023, arguing, “The Green Party recognises that NATO has an important role in ensuring the ability of its member states to respond to threats to their security,” while absurdly pledging to “work within NATO to achieve a greater focus on global peacebuilding.” This is still party policy, with no new motion on NATO passed at this year’s conference.

At home, the Greens have disgraced themselves in the local councils they have led, implementing millions of pounds of austerity cuts in Brighton and Hove and twice going to war with the city’s bin workers over pay and conditions—threatening legal action, authorising strikebreaking and encouraging scabs. The party is shaping up to do the same in Bristol City Council, continuing the role it played supporting the previous Labour-controlled administration. It worked with Labour and the Liberal Democrats to run a cuts council in Sheffield from 2020-2023.

This is routinely justified, as it was by the Corbynites, with reference to the right-wing agenda of national governments—including by Polanski in comments to *The Canary*, where he praised Brighton council’s “strong record”. But the Green Party, again like the Corbynites, does nothing to organise popular opposition to that agenda. Its now four MPs—former co-leaders Adrian Ramsay and Carla Denyer, plus Ellie Chown and Siân Berry—pursue an insipid localism coupled with vague calls for a “fairer” society.

Polanski’s politics, for all the bluster, are not much of a departure. Although Ramsay and Chown ran a joint leadership campaign on a platform of “credibility”, chafing even at Polanski’s rhetoric, they and the rest of the Green Party establishment would be entirely comfortable agreeing with his statement at conference that social issues “are rooted in an economic model built on austerity and privatisation”—as if some other form of capitalism is available.

His signature call for a wealth tax—of 1 percent on assets over £10 million and 2 percent on assets over £1 billion—was official Green Party policy going into the last election under Denyer and Ramsay, safe ground given its limited character and the fact that the party had no opportunity to implement it. Polanski has simply turned up the volume on the rhetoric.

The Green Party left

A relatively small internal group, Greens Organise, reportedly with roughly 1,200 members, has gained some prominence with Polanski’s victory and is once more claiming the party can go further.

Launched in September 2024, its founding statement claimed, “We believe in the power of a clear, bold message that speaks directly to the public’s demand for real change, mobilises a diverse working class, and secures a broad mandate for an internationalist, anti-capitalist, and ecologically transformative agenda.” Its constitution adopted in June 2025 declared as its goals:

To pursue an internationalist and eco-socialist transformation of society so that resources are held in common and society is run in the interests of people, not profit;

To pursue racial liberation, sex and gender liberation, trans liberation, the liberation of LGBTIQ+ people, class liberation, religious liberation, disabled liberation – in sum, total liberation from systems and ideologies that oppress people on the basis of

their identity and experience;

To mobilise a diverse working class in pursuit of the aforementioned aims...

This is a radical-sounding gloss. The struggle for socialism means mobilising the working class not as one of a host of identities, but on the basis of its independent class interests as the decisive revolutionary force in capitalist society. Doing so requires a political fight against the capitalist class, its state and its agencies in the working class—trade union bureaucrats and pseudo-reformist opponents of the class struggle—dissolved here into “systems and ideologies”.

Substituting a shopping list of liberations and an “eco-socialist transformation” for the necessary global revolutionary struggle by the working class against the world capitalist system, Greens Organise orients to “labour, social and environmental movements”: that is, to the trade union bureaucracy and various middle-class pressure groups. It dissolves class issues into the socially progressive politics of sections of the affluent urban middle class, centred on somehow moderating capitalism’s worst impulses.

This approach has been championed in the UK for decades by the publication *Red Pepper*, of which Greens Organise Steering Committee member James O’Nions was the editor for five years. It amounts practically to the organisation serving as a loyal ginger group on the wider party, with co-chair Steve Jackson telling *Tribune*, “maybe the role of Greens Organise... will be to keep Zack honest”, stressing that “The Green Party isn’t hostile” to their work.

Green Corbynism

Greens Organise has become a home for disaffected Corbynites and their “broad church” politics. Multiple members of the Steering Committee are former Labour members, including Jackson and fellow co-chair Hau-Yu Tam.

Tam was elected a Labour councillor as late as 2022, under Starmer, and only resigned in 2024, essentially after being forced out. She explains in an interview with the Young Democratic Socialists of America: “It reached the point where they tried to expel me with allegations of organizing a Palestine protest against the very council that I’m a member of. This was all cooked up because I was talking to activists in Lewisham.

“I gave my evidence and made my plea to stay. I was mostly exonerated in the end. At that point, I continued as a Labour councillor for a while, but I’d stopped believing in it.”

Nothing has been learned from these experiences, recounted in the style of “I didn’t leave the Labour Party; the Labour Party left me.” The translation being: I was satisfied with Corbyn’s politics of lukewarm reformism, capitulation and collaboration with right-wing “allies”; now it has been thoroughly routed in the Labour Party, I must have to pursue it elsewhere.

Tam describes herself as a “semi-pluralist”: “third parties (Plaid Cymru, Greens, Left-independents) uniting (even with the socialists in Labour) on the basis of shared common values: anti-racism, anti-fascism, anti-capitalism, pro-LGBT rights, pro-community.”

Another Steering Committee member, Robert Magowan, has written, “The priority for now should be engagement and building the mandate for a minimum programme country-wide”.

He adds, “A trickier consideration is the walking dead that is the [Socialist Campaign Group] and the soft left of the [Parliamentary Labour Party]... an unintended consequence of Greens’ success in the coming

years would be to strengthen this rump and perhaps return it to a position where it could challenge for the post-Starmer leadership.” He adds the caveat that “A dividing line may be needed to decisively discount Labour’s right”!

The Greens’ role in next May’s local elections would be to “help steer the national narrative of protest away from Reform and towards the challenge from Labour’s left,” appealing to others to “keep one eye on the local relationships with Greens that might be helpful down the line, even if those involve constructive political pressure.”

In an interview by *Red Pepper* with Greens Organise members Magowan, Zoë Garbett and Ani Chowdhury, they are asked, “Are you thinking that a Green government is possible or are you thinking a radical and successful Green Party might move Labour to the left?” Chowdhury replied, “It’s both.”

Green Parties internationally

Red Pepper raises the example of the New Popular Front (NPF) in France, of which the French Greens are members, with Chowdhury replying enthusiastically, “The left often falls into an insular focus on dividing up the minority of votes rather than working collectively towards the seismic shift in public opinion and mobilisation we need.”

The role of the NPF, and the Greens within it, has been to squash popular sentiment in France and prevent a mobilisation against the hated government of Emmanuel Macron, allowing him multiple tries at installing a government of sweeping cuts and savage militarism.

A similar role has been played by Green Parties across the continent. The Green Party in Germany has helped lead Germany’s campaign of remilitarisation, supported imperialist interventions abroad and backed cuts and attacks on migrants. But even where the Greens are less explicitly right-wing, they have played a critical role for European capitalism in propping up coalition governments implementing attacks on the working class, including in Belgium, Austria and Ireland.

In Ireland, the Greens participated in the two most significant austerity governments of recent decades: the 2007-11 government amid the fallout of the financial crash and the 2020-24 government amid the COVID pandemic crisis—both times with the right-wing conservative Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil. The Scottish Greens did the same with the Scottish National Party in 2021-24.

Polanski is lining up to play a similar role. Asked about an electoral alliance with the Labour Party, his only stumbling block was Keir Starmer, deemed too toxic to touch and whose days are already numbered. “Will I work with a future Labour leader? Depends who the Labour leader is.”

Revolutionary politics versus green reformism

The role played by Green Parties internationally confirms the bankruptcy of reformism, both social and environmental, under conditions in which capitalism is tearing up the reforms of the past, waging trade war, remilitarising and strengthening the state and the far-right to prepare even more reactionary policies.

The Revolutionary Communist Party has nevertheless been as eager to embrace Zack Polanski’s Green Party as they are Corbyn’s Your Party. It advises him to “follow-through his bold talk with bold action” to continue winning support, politely advising that the problems he “is highlighting

require revolutionary, working-class solutions on an international level” and promising to “continue to provide analysis and comradely critique of the Greens’ programme”.

The Socialist Workers Party are trying to pull off a more complicated manoeuvre, criticizing the Greens for truths which they ignore or excuse in relation to Your Party, including: their being “unreliable allies in struggle”, “not anchored to any particular strategy of social transformation”, and “absorbing elements from a range of social movements, tending towards an under-theorised pragmatism”.

Their main problem is the Greens’ “lack of a base in or orientation on the working class”, by which they mean the Labour “left” and the trade union bureaucracy. Because of this, “A radical vision of Your Party has the potential to go beyond what the Greens have to offer.”

Covering all bases in case YP falls to pieces, a hand is left extended just in case: “Clearly, local pacts between the Greens and whatever left candidates stand in next year’s council elections will need to be made in specific areas, but a Red-Green popular front should not be the starting point.”

The Socialist Equality Party urges workers and young people to reject all variants of this perspective. A revolutionary movement is not built by championing the reformist initiatives of both the Green and Your Party. The popular striving for a left-wing solution to Starmer’s police-state government of austerity and war can only go down to defeat if kept within the confines of either the Greens or YP, as has been the case with every similar formation—from Syriza in Greece to Podemos in Spain and the Left Party in Germany.

What is required is a genuinely socialist party of the working class, relentlessly opposed to the false hopes offered by Corbyn and Polanski, refusing to blur the class lines with them, and with the freedom to intervene in all aspects of the class struggle on an avowedly revolutionary line. Only in this way can a Marxist leadership be built and workers mobilised against a capitalist system plunging into the abyss.



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