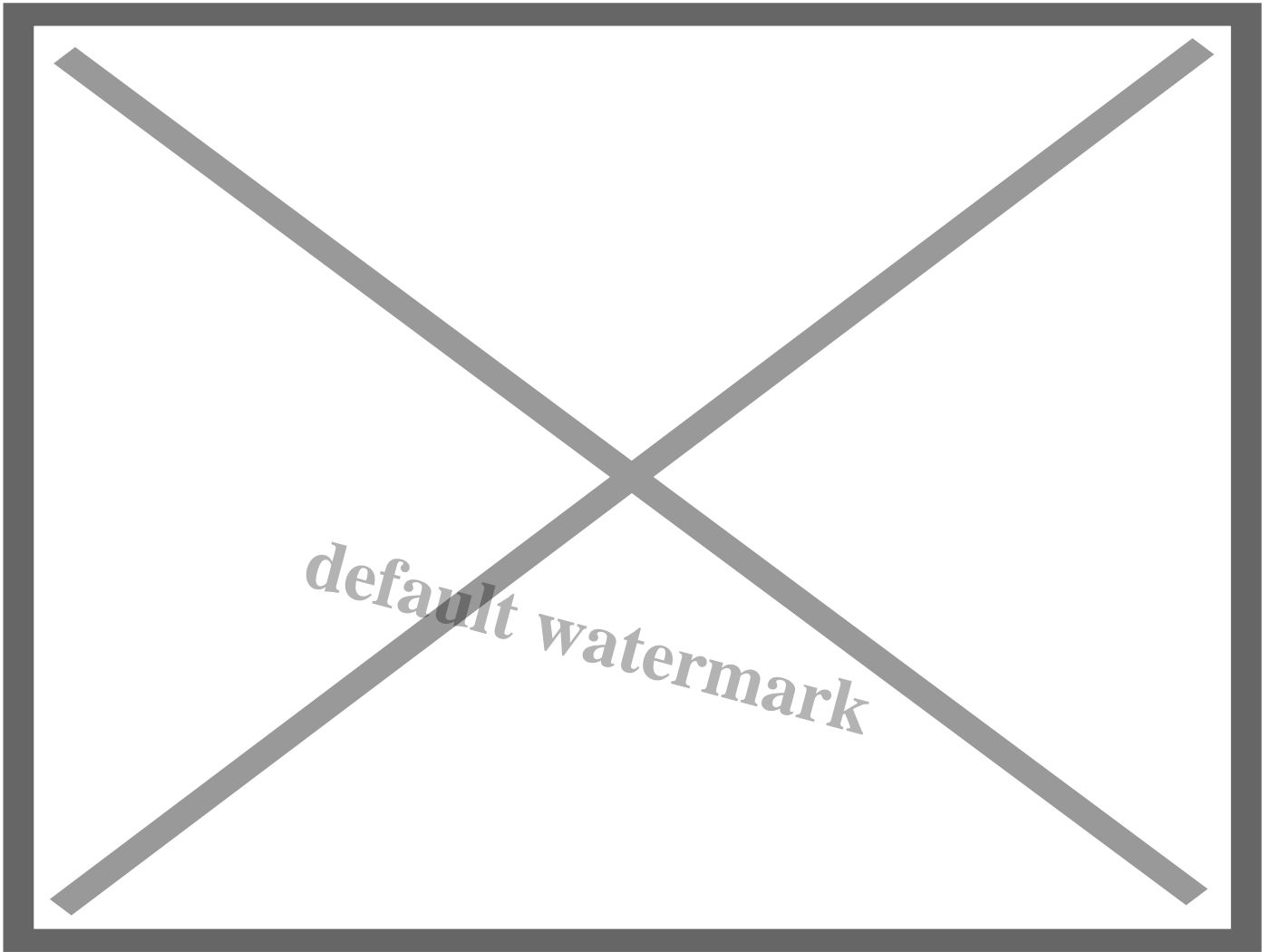




AI Carns is not an independent voice

Description

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Al Carns has bottled the idea of entering a Labour leadership race. The ex-Armed Forces Minister had been eager to establish himself as a supposedly “independent” voice in recent weeks, [resigning](#) from Keir Starmer’s cabinet on 11 June.

Carns was previously a supporter of the Conservative Party, and his conversion to Starmer’s Labour was [said](#) to have surprised former colleagues. He was generously given the “safe” Labour seat of Birmingham Selly Oak after the previous MP, Steve McCabe, [announced](#) that he would not be standing for re-election in 2024. McCabe had served as a parliamentary chair of Labour Friends of Israel from 2020 until his resignation, and [accepted](#) several trips funded by the lobby group.

Carns’s own [financial disclosures](#) show only one donor to his 2024 general election campaign: the ex-chair of Labour Friends of Israel (LFI), Jonathan Mendelsohn.

Jonathan Mendelsohn

Mendelsohn is also a [former trustee](#) of the New Israel Fund’s UK branch. In 2018, he was [sacked](#) from Jeremy Corbyn’s shadow cabinet after attending a men-only Presidents Club Dinner at which

female hostesses were groped and sexually harassed. He denied any wrongdoing.

Under Gordon Brown, Mendelsohn was made chief fundraiser for the Labour Party. He had [previously worked](#) as a spokesman for Ruth Parasol, a businesswoman who made her fortune from online gambling and pornography. Her Parasol Foundation Trust now works with Tel Aviv University.

Mendelsohn secured the fundraising job under Brown despite having previously lobbied on behalf of Ladbrokes for "favourable" gambling regulation. He later became chair of Evoke, another betting firm which owns the William Hill and 888casino brands.

Mendelsohn now leads [CedarsOak Ltd.](#) alongside Conservative Friends of Israel director Stuart Polak. Former Conservative minister Alan Duncan [famously accused](#) Polak of "exercising the interests of another country" and "doing the bidding of Netanyahu in parliament".

Although he funded Carns' election campaign in his own name, Mendelsohn has also previously paid for the office costs of Labour's ex-Health Minister, [Wes Streeting](#) through his Red Capital Ltd. operation. At the time, Mendelsohn was also a director of the Europa Healthcare Group, a private healthcare provider.

Streeting was the first member of Starmer's cabinet to accept a Labour Friends of Israel-funded trip. He also said that Epstein-informant Peter ... should not be considered "guilty by association". Jonathan Mendelsohn was a director of Mendelsohn's [Policy Network](#)

Despite his close links to gambling firms and pro-Israeli organisations, Mendelsohn continues to play a key role in the Labour Party. Keir Starmer may now be considered dead weight, but the lobbyists who funded his rise to power are determined to retain their influence.

Al Carns and Andy Burnham are being presented as "insurgents" in a last-ditch attempt to save Labour from collapse. In reality, they represent more of the same.

Featured image via [the Guardian](#)

By [Jody McIntyre](#)

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