



The Burnham Coup

Description

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Burnham

Without so much as a leadership contest, it is becoming clear that [Andy Burnham](#) will be Prime Minister within weeks. Substantive change to the Labour Party machine, however, is a distant dream. Indeed, Burnham is acting as if he already has the keys to No. 10.

Burnham's chief of staff

We now know that his chief of staff will be [James Purnell](#) an ex-chair of Labour Friends of Israel. In 2002, Purnell was [hosted](#) by the Israeli state in Tel Aviv. Now, he will be the most senior adviser in the British government.

The lobby group was one of the first to congratulate Andy Burnham after his Makerfield by-election victory. Within hours, LFI [told](#) Burnham:

We look forward to working with you.

Mandelson's shadow

Peter Mandelson previously [called](#) Purnell "one of my boys", saying:

I love James.

Like the Prince of Darkness, Purnell is no stranger to the world of lobbying, having been a director and shareholder of Flint Global right up to his [announcement](#) as Burnham's new chief of staff.

Team Burnham wants the public to believe that his former role will have no impact on his decisions in government, [saying](#) that future conflicts of interest would be "appropriately managed".

After recent events, one might forgive the public for questioning Labour's judgement in such affairs. Mandelson may have [resigned](#) from the party in February, but his model remains.

A potential cabinet?

When Burnham served in war criminal Tony Blair's Labour government, his most senior special adviser was Jennifer Gerber. She is now a [director](#) of Labour Friends of Israel Limited. In an interview published this morning, Gerber [said](#) that Burnham is someone "who will listen and who cares" about Israel.

Ex-cabinet minister [Josh Simons](#) "gave up" his Makerfield seat for Burnham, and is now [reportedly](#) in line for the head of policy role. In October 2023, Josh Simons [hosted an event](#) with then Labour peer Mandelson. Also present was Jonathan Reynolds, another ex-vice-chair of Labour Friends of Israel.

Labour's ex-Health Minister, [Wes Streeting](#) [rallying](#) against an Andy Burnham coronation just weeks ago. But with abysmal poll ratings [suggesting](#) he could lose even against Starmer, he instead spotted an opportunity to curry favour and switched to back Burnham. Other Labour MPs flouted as leadership contenders, including Starmer's chief secretary [Darren Jones](#) have quickly fallen into line.

Shabana Mahmood is also set for a [plum role](#) in Andy Burnham's cabinet. Last October, she received [£50,000](#) from Francesca Perrin. Perrin is the daughter of David Sainsbury, another Blair-era cabinet minister who has donated millions to Starmer's Labour.

Ed Miliband is another establishment favourite eyeing up a promotion under Andy Burnham. At the 2011 Labour Friends of Israel annual lunch, Miliband [proclaimed](#)

"I'm grateful to Israel, I respect Israel, I admire Israel."

Like Miliband, Burnham is a long-time supporter of LFI, and at a 2015 Labour leadership hustings hosted by the organisation, he [promised](#) that his first foreign trip would be to the settler state.

Keir Starmer rose to power through dirty politics. Now, the same machine that aggrandised the "blank slate" candidate has thrown him to the curb.

Andy Burnham is the lobby's new man.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Jody McIntyre](#)

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