

# Labour Party leadership candidates profess Zionism at Jewish Labour Movement hustings

By Robert Stevens  
18 February 2020

Labour members will begin voting for the new leader of the party this week. Of the original contenders, three remain—right-wingers Sir Keir Starmer and Lisa Nandy and the chosen candidate of the Corbyn “left,” Rebecca Long-Bailey.

The winner will be announced April 4. The contest was called following Labour’s catastrophic defeat in December’s general election in which Boris Johnson’s Conservatives won an 80-seat majority.

On Friday, Jeremy Corbyn’s shadow foreign secretary, Emily Thornberry, was eliminated having failed to secure the backing of enough Constituency Labour Parties or three affiliates—including two trade unions. Leadership favourite, Starmer, won the backing of 368 CLPs; Long-Bailey, 159, and Nandy, 69.

Around 580,000 Labour members will vote in the election, the majority of whom joined on the basis of Corbyn’s claims that he would transform the party based on opposition to the war and austerity agenda of his Blairite predecessors. After Corbyn’s four years in office, the Blairites are on the verge of winning back the leadership amid the threat of mass expulsions of Corbyn supporters.

Last Friday, following the unprecedented intervention by the pro-Zionist Board of Deputies of British Jews, who demanded the candidates pledge to continue the witch-hunt of party members falsely accused of being anti-Semites, the remaining candidates participated in a hustings organized by the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM). The event was co-sponsored by Labour Friends of Israel that counts on the backing of dozens of Blairites.

The tone for the evening was set when Jewish Labour Movement chair Mike Katz asked in his introduction why Labour had supposedly become a home for “anti-Semites,” “racists” and “Holocaust deniers.”

An audience member shouted out “Corbyn!” to widespread laughter, to which Katz replied, “Top prize.”

Moderating was ITV reporter Robert Peston who has played a significant role in furthering the filthy manufactured anti-Semitism campaign by the Labour right. Last November, he wrote an article in the pro-Conservative *Spectator* declaring that “Labour’s failure on anti-Semitism” called into question “whether Jeremy Corbyn is fit to be prime minister having seemingly been too tolerant for too long of avowed anti-Semites.”

After the candidates’ opening statements, Peston declared that Labour’s disciplinary processes were “shit” in investigating anti-Semitism. He asked Long-Bailey, “Do you regard it as anti-Semitic, to describe Israel, its policies or the circumstances around its foundation as racist because of their discriminatory impact? Is that an anti-Semitic statement?”

Long-Bailey said “Yes.” Peston replied, “Right, so Jeremy Corbyn presented to the NEC [National Executive Committee] a document, in which he wanted the NEC to approve, which would have said that that statement is not anti-Semitic. That was a disgrace, wasn’t it?”

To jeers from the audience, Long-Bailey said pathetically, “Well, I can’t remember the exact words that were used ...” Peston interrupted shouting at her, “I don’t care. I’ve got the words, I covered it at the time. It was a story I reported on ...”

Long-Bailey could only fall for Peston’s trick question because she agrees in all essentials with the right and, like Corbyn, has done nothing in four years to oppose a state orchestrated witch-hunt.

Peston asked the candidates, “What have you done to try and eliminate the scourge of anti-Semitism?” In reply all competed to portray themselves as the only ones

prepared to deal with the nonexistent “scourge” within Labour’s ranks and laid out how they will work with the Blairites and Zionists to expel Labour members.

Long-Bailey said, “We have to say sorry and I’ll say sorry again tonight. We’ve not tackled this issue within the party. I’ve said very clearly that I’ll adopt all of the Board of Deputies’ 10 pledges. I’ll act upon the recommendation made by the Equality and Human Rights Commission [EHRC] ... and I find it quite shameful that we are now being investigated by them ...”

She favoured the Jewish Labour Movement being drafted in—for them to educate Labour members in how not to be anti-Semites.

Nandy continued to denounce “a leadership that is still now refusing to disclose the submission that we made to the EHRC.”

Introduced at the event alongside Katz was Dame Louise Ellman, a Zionist who undermined Corbyn for years as part of Blairite plots to remove him and purge the party’s left leaning membership. Ellman resigned from the party last October, with a few other Blairites, including Luciana Berger.

Berger and another Blairite, Chuka Umunna, then left the short-lived Independent Group they founded and stood in the December General Election for the Liberal Democrats.

Long-Bailey grovelled in agreement with her right-wing opponents that she would re-admit Ellman, Berger and the others back into the party.

The hustings ended with the astonishing spectacle where each candidate had to answer the question from the floor “Are you a Zionist?” in order to win the favour of the JLM.

All obliged, with Long-Bailey stating, “I also agree with a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian state ... I suppose that makes me a Zionist because I agree with Israel’s right to exist and right to self-determine.”

Starmer declared with a straight face, “I don’t describe myself as a Zionist but I understand, sympathise and support Zionism.”

Long-Bailey’s apologetics before the JLM were treated with disdain by the JLM’s right-wing membership. She received just 1.4 percent of their vote as they, as one of Labour’s societies, nominated Nandy, just ahead of Starmer, to be party leader.

There is seething resentment among Labour members at the Zionist/Blairite witch-hunt.

On Saturday, Labour-supporting website SKWAWKBOX reported that a party member based in

Manchester had died within days of being expelled from the party under a new “fast track” disciplinary process. SKWAWKBOX wrote that she “is understood to have died on Tuesday as a result of a brain haemorrhage that locals are linking to stress brought on by her summary expulsion under a new ‘fast track’ process in which the party’s National Executive Committee (NEC) is expelling members against whom antisemitism complaints have been made.”

The report added, “Even more worryingly—but entirely predictably—the Manchester death above is far from the only death after expulsion that the party is having to look into.” It understood from “a separate source that as many as three people have died recently following expulsion—and that there have been at least as many attempted suicides.”

SKWAWKBOX also made public comments from a source who told them that much of the supposed “evidence” on which members are investigated for anti-Semitism is “so flimsy or irrelevant that when we’ve talked to our legal advisers we have no choice but to reject it as unfit—as much as 90 percent of it in some cases.”

The Corbyn leadership moved swiftly to defend their role in now carrying out the witch-hunt on behalf of the right-wing. Labour’s head of complaints, Laura Murray, is the daughter of one of Corbyn’s chief advisers—the Stalinist Andrew Murray. She stated, “This woman tragically died of a brain haemorrhage, nothing to do with her Labour Party membership and no evidence of a link.”

The truth about the deaths and attempted suicides will no doubt emerge in subsequent investigations. But an unanswerable refutation of the false claims of Labour being infested with “left-wing anti-Semites” is that the Metropolitan Police, after over a year of a “criminal investigation” into Labour based on a dossier supplied to it by the party right and supposedly chock full of cases of anti-Semitic behaviour, have come up with only *five people*—in a party of around half a million members—who *may* be prosecuted if the Crown Prosecution Service decides to do so.

To contact the WSWWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>