In a highly contentious election, which saw 4,500 voters discounted during the vetting process, for supporting rival parties, Corbyn achieved the majority of the vote in the first round of the election. This was despite him being the ranked outsider at the start of the campaign. Odds of 200–1 were offered for him to be elected. Andy Burnham came second in the election with 19% of the vote share, closely followed by Yvette Cooper, who secured 17% of the votes cast. The Blairite candidate Liz Kendall only managed to win 13,601 votes (4.5% of the total votes).

Tom Watson was elected deputy leader of the party on the same day. He secured the necessary 50.7% of the vote in the third-round result after Ben Bradshaw’s and then Angela Eagle’s votes were re-distributed according to the alternative vote electoral system used to decide the contest.

A divisive leader?
Corbyn’s shadow Labour cabinet (see table on next page), despite containing a majority of women, has been criticised for the number of men occupying the most prominent posts. Several senior Labour Party figures have also refused to serve on the front bench under Corbyn. These include Chuka Umunna, Mary Creagh, Tristram Hunt and Rachel Reeves, as well as fellow leadership candidates Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall.

A rebellious history
Jeremy Corbyn is ideologically the most left-wing of the leadership candidates. He is also the most inexperienced, having never served in government, as well as the most rebellious: during the years 1997–2010, Corbyn defied the party whip 428 times. In 2010–15 he was the second-most rebellious Labour MP, beaten only by the new shadow chancellor John McDonnell.

Opposition to the Conservative agenda
Jeremy Corbyn will oppose the majority of the current Conservative government’s policies, especially its deficit reduction programme.
Corbyn favours nationalisation of the railways

- He favours a slower approach to tackling the deficit and endorses higher taxation over spending cuts.
- He opposes the government’s HS2 plans, preferring the re-nationalisation of the railways.
- He supports the public ownership of energy companies.
- He will not support the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons programme.
- As national chair of the Stop the War Coalition, he will refuse to support the use of air strikes in Syria to defeat the so-called Islamic State (IS).

The first Cameron vs Corbyn battle in the House of Commons was over the government’s trade union reform bill, which Corbyn described as ‘attacking working people’. One of the few areas that David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn may agree on is the EU. Corbyn has refused to rule out supporting Britain’s exit from the EU unless reforms occur.

**Questions**

1. What is the future of the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership?
2. In what ways can Corbyn and the Labour Party provide an effective opposition to the government in the House of Commons?

**Weblinks to follow up**

Find out more about Jeremy Corbyn at his website: [http://jeremycorbyn.org.uk/about/](http://jeremycorbyn.org.uk/about/)
View Jeremy Corbyn’s victory speech in full: [www.tinyurl.com/qjocu3n](www.tinyurl.com/qjocu3n)