



Press Release

DiEM25 launches campaign to prevent Jeremy Corbyn's strategic bankruptcy

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DiEM25, the paneuropean progressive political movement, is joining the [Peace & Justice project](#) in a crowdfunding campaign to prevent Jeremy Corbyn's strategic bankruptcy due to a "lawfare" suit which has left the former UK Labour leader with an outstanding legal bill of £400,000.

[Said DiEM25 co-founder Yanis Varoufakis](#): "The powers-that-be know that Jeremy is not like them. Jeremy Corbyn has not stored up treasures by cozying up to bankers, company directors, conglomerates, the oligarchy. Without extraordinary personal wealth and assets, no one could meet the demands of a bill such as this. Which is of course the de facto ulterior motive behind this absurd affair: To prevent Jeremy's political participation by tying him up in legal cases and financial difficulty, and to intimidate others like him into silence and submission."

Background

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was sued for defamation by Richard Millett, following comments made on the Andrew Marr show in September 2018. Just two weeks before the case was due to go to trial in October 2022, Mr Millett abruptly dropped his defamation claim.

The court settlement fully vindicated Jeremy - as is shown by the terms of the settlement in which it was agreed that he pay no damages, give no undertaking not to repeat the words complained of, pay no costs to Millett save for costs of an appeal in 2021, and make no apology. But he has been left with an enormous legal bill for the work undertaken in his defence over the last three and a half years.

Originally in the region of £1,477,000. In July 2020, a grassroots fundraising campaign was launched independently to support Jeremy. Extraordinarily, it received over 24,000 individual donations, typically in amounts of £5 to £20. After associated costs, negotiations and further private donations, this leaves Jeremy with an outstanding bill of approximately £400,000. A bill of this size threatens his political existence.

While this seems enormously unfair, it is the reality of our legal system, and UK defamation law, which favours those with endless financial resources, whatever the rights and wrongs of the case. Jeremy's case is a clear, potent form of 'lawfare'.

In recent years, there has been increasing publicity about the use of so-called strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). These tactics have been described as having



a 'chilling' effect on free speech. The UK's defamation law favours claimants, precisely because of huge costs that can run into the millions, and the fact that there is no legal aid for libel.

Unfortunately, many of the people who have defamed Jeremy Corbyn – and many other socialists - know how imbalanced the legal system is and use it to their advantage. Unless you have considerable private wealth as a way of paying the costs involved, most people decide it isn't worth fighting SLAPPs.

Defending Jeremy Corbyn

In some ways, defending Jeremy Corbyn is about simple solidarity - a mainstay of the socialist movement across the globe. When Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour leader in 2015, it shook the political establishment, not just in the UK, but in Europe and all over the world. The first Labour MP resigned while Jeremy Corbyn was making his acceptance speech, and there has been (and continues to be) a determined campaign to undermine him and the political project that was built around him. This onslaught has taken many forms, from political sabotage to lawfare and defamation.

Jeremy Corbyn has spent his whole political life working determinedly for a better, more decent world. His vision is one that we all share in and hope for. Now it is time to repay that determination with solidarity of our own.

Defending democracy & socialism

But this defence goes beyond Jeremy Corbyn. It is symbolic of an attempted silencing of our collective voices. The democratic and socialist movement is increasingly under attack, whether through ideological warfare or the 'chilling' effect of lawfare – intimidating whistle-blowers, activists and civil society organisations seeking to scrutinise the powerful or simple truths said online, in the media or in print.

Both the defamation and the lawfare attacks on Jeremy Corbyn fit into a pattern of wider attacks, which envisaged the mass expulsion of Labour Party socialists and the 'rooting out' of so-called 'Corbynistas', eventually to delegitimise the left and push it out of public life entirely.

Being able to speak the truth is fundamental to socialists and democracy. Without it, we will slide towards an authoritarian future, where progressives, democrats and socialists can be intimidated into silence. This has massive implications for our politics going forward – in supporting Jeremy Corbyn we say to those who are opposed to the very world that we are fighting for: **we will not be intimidated into voicelessness.**

[DiEM25's crowdfunding campaign](#)

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