

= Ken Livingstone =

Kenneth Robert " Ken " Livingstone ( born 17 June 1945 ) is an English politician who served as the Leader of the Greater London Council ( GLC ) from 1981 until the council was abolished in 1986 , and as Mayor of London from the creation of the office in 2000 until 2008 . He also served as the Member of Parliament ( MP ) for Brent East from 1987 to 2001 . A suspended member of the Labour Party , he was on the party 's hard left , ideologically identifying as a democratic socialist .

Born in Lambeth , South London , to a working @-@ class family , Livingstone joined Labour in 1968 and was elected to represent Norwood at the GLC in 1973 , Hackney North and Stoke Newington in 1977 , and Paddington in 1981 , when he was elected leader of the GLC by Labour members . Attempting to reduce London Underground fares , his plans were challenged in court and declared unlawful ; more successful were his schemes to benefit women and underprivileged minorities , despite stiff opposition . Livingstone was heavily criticised in the mainstream media for supporting controversial issues like republicanism , LGBT rights , and a United Ireland , and given the moniker " Red Ken " . Livingstone was a vocal opponent of the Conservative Party government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher , which in 1986 abolished the GLC . Elected as MP for Brent East in 1987 , he became closely associated with anti @-@ racist campaigns . He unsuccessfully stood for Labour Party leader on a leftist platform in 1992 and 1994 , and became a vocal critic of Tony Blair 's New Labour project that pushed the party to the centre .

After failing to become Labour 's candidate in the 2000 London mayoral election , Livingstone successfully contested the election as an independent candidate . In his first term as Mayor of London , he introduced the congestion charge , Oyster card , and articulated buses , and unsuccessfully opposed the government 's privatisation of London Underground . Despite his opposition to Blair 's government on issues like the Iraq War , Livingstone was invited to stand for re @-@ election as Labour 's candidate and was re @-@ elected in 2004 , expanding his transport policies , introducing new environmental regulations , and enacting civil rights policies . Initiating and overseeing London 's winning bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympics and ushering in a major redevelopment of the city 's East End , his leadership after the 7 July 2005 London bombings was widely praised . He stood unsuccessfully as Labour candidate in London 's mayoral elections of 2008 and 2012 , losing both to the Conservative candidate Boris Johnson .

Characterised as " the only truly successful Left @-@ wing British politician of modern times " , Livingstone is a highly controversial figure in British politics . Supporters lauded his efforts to improve rights for women , LGBT people , and ethnic minorities in London , but critics accused him of cronyism and antisemitism and lambasted his connections to Islamists , Marxists , and Irish republicans .

= = Early life = =

= = Childhood and young adulthood : 1945 ? 1967 = = =

Livingstone was born in his grandmother 's house in Lambeth , south London , on 17 June 1945 . His family was working class ; his mother , Ethel Ada ( née Kennard , 1915 ? 1997 ) , had been born in Southwark before training as an acrobatic dancer and working on the music hall circuit prior to the Second World War . Ken 's Scottish father , Robert " Bob " Moffat Livingstone ( 1915 ? 1971 ) , had been born in Dunoon before joining the Merchant Navy in 1932 and becoming ship 's master .

Having first met in April 1940 at a music hall in Workington , they married within three months . After the war the couple moved in with Ethel 's aggressive mother , Zona Ann ( Williams ) , whom Livingstone considered " tyrannical " . Livingstone 's sister Lin was born 21 ? 2 years later . Robert and Ethel went through various jobs in the post @-@ war years , with the former working on fishing trawlers and English Channel ferries , while the latter worked in a bakers , at Freemans catalogue dispatch and as a cinema usherette . Livingstone 's parents were " working class Tories " , and unlike many Conservative voters at the time did not hold to socially conservative views on race and

sexuality , opposing racism and homophobia . The family was nominally Anglican , although Livingstone abandoned Christianity when he was 11 , becoming an atheist .

Moving to a Tulse Hill council housing estate , Livingstone attended St. Leonard 's Primary School , and after failing his eleven plus exam , in 1956 began secondary education at Tulse Hill Comprehensive School . In 1957 , his family purchased their own property at 66 Wolfington Road , West Norwood . Rather shy at school , he was bullied , and got into trouble for truancy . One year , his form master was Philip Hobsbaum , who encouraged his pupils to debate current events , first interesting Livingstone in politics . He related that he became " an argumentative cocky little brat " at home , bringing up topics at the dinner table to enrage his father . His interest in politics was furthered by the 1958 Papal election of Pope John XXIII ? a man who had " a strong impact " on Livingstone ? and the United States presidential election , 1960 . At Tulse Hill Comprehensive he gained his interest in amphibians and reptiles , keeping several as pets ; his mother worried that rather than focusing on school work all he cared about was " his pet lizard and friends " . At school he attained four O @-@ levels in English Literature , English Language , Geography and Art , subjects he later described as " the easy ones " . He started work rather than stay on for the non @-@ compulsory sixth form , which required six O @-@ levels .

From 1962 @-@ 70 , he worked as a technician at the Chester Beatty cancer research laboratory in Fulham , looking after animals used in experimentation . Most of the technicians were socialists , and Livingstone helped found a branch of the Association of Scientific , Technical and Managerial Staffs to fight redundancies imposed by company bosses . Livingstone 's leftist views solidified upon the election of Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1964 . With a friend from Chester Beatty , Livingstone toured West Africa in 1966 , visiting Algeria , Niger , Nigeria , Lagos , Ghana and Togo . Interested in the region 's wildlife , Livingstone rescued an infant ostrich from being eaten , donating it to Lagos children 's zoo . Returning home , he took part in several protest marches as a part of the anti @-@ Vietnam War movement , becoming increasingly interested in politics and briefly subscribing to the publication of a libertarian socialist group , Solidarity .

= = = Political activism : 1968 ? 1970 = = =

Livingstone joined the Labour Party in March 1968 , when he was 23 years old , later describing it as " one of the few recorded instances of a rat climbing aboard a sinking ship " . At the time , many leftists were leaving in disgust at the Labour government 's support for the U.S. in the Vietnam War , cuts to the National Health Service budget , and restrictions on trade unions ; many went on to join far @-@ left parties like the International Socialists and the Socialist Labour League , or single @-@ issue groups like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Child Poverty Action Group . Suffering mass electoral defeat at the local elections , in London , Labour lost 15 boroughs , including Livingstone 's London Borough of Lambeth , which came under Conservative control . Contrastingly , Livingstone believed that grassroots campaigning ? such as the 1968 student protests ? were ineffective , joining Labour because he considered it the best chance for implementing progressive political change in the UK .

Joining his local Labour branch in Norwood , he involved himself in their operations , within a month becoming chair and secretary of the Norwood Young Socialists , gaining a place on the constituency 's General Management and Executive Committees , and sitting on the Local Government Committee who prepared Labour 's manifesto for the next borough election . Hoping for better qualifications , he attended night school , gaining O @-@ levels in Human Anatomy , Physiology and Hygiene , and an A @-@ level in Zoology . Leaving his job at Chester Beatty , in September 1970 he began a 3 @-@ year course at the Philippa Fawcett Teacher Training College ( PFTTC ) in Streatham ; his attendance was poor , and he considered it " a complete waste " of time . Beginning a romantic relationship with Christine Chapman , president of the PFTTC student 's union , the couple married in 1973 .

Realising the Conservative governance of Lambeth Borough council was hard to unseat , Livingstone aided Eddie Lopez in reaching out to members of the local populace disenfranchised from the traditional Labour leadership . Associating with the leftist Schools ' Action Union ( SAU )

founded in the wake of the 1968 student protests , he encouraged members of the Brixton branch of the Black Panther Party to join Labour . His involvement in the SAU led to his dismissal from the PFTCC student 's union , who disagreed with politicising secondary school pupils .

= = = Lambeth Housing Committee : 1971 ? 1973 = = =

In 1971 , Livingstone and his comrades developed a new strategy for obtaining political power in Lambeth borough . Focusing on campaigning for the marginal seats in the south of the borough , the safe Labour seats in the north were left to established party members . Public dissatisfaction with the Conservative government of Prime Minister Edward Heath led to Labour 's best local government results since the 1940s ; Labour leftists gained every marginal seat in Lambeth , and the borough returned to Labour control . In October 1971 , Livingstone 's father died of a heart attack ; his mother soon moved to Lincoln . That year , Labour members voted Livingstone Vice @-@ Chairman of the Housing Committee on the Lambeth London Borough Council , his first job in local government . Reforming the housing system , Livingstone and Committee Chairman Ewan Carr cancelled the proposed rent increase for council housing , temporarily halting the construction of Europe 's largest tower blocks , and founded a Family Squatting Group to ensure that homeless families would be immediately rehoused through squatting in empty houses . He increased the number of compulsory purchase orders for private @-@ rented properties , converting them to council housing . They faced opposition to their reforms , which were cancelled by central government .

Livingstone and the leftists became embroiled in factional in @-@ fighting within Labour , vying for powerful positions with centrist members . Although never adopting Marxism , Livingstone became involved with a number of Trotskyist groups active within Labour ; viewing them as potential allies , he became friends with Chris Knight , Graham Bash and Keith Veness , members of the Socialist Charter , a Trotskyist cell affiliated with the Revolutionary Communist League that had infiltrated the Labour party . In his struggle against Labour centrists , Livingstone was influenced by Trotskyist Ted Knight , who convinced him to oppose the use of British troops in Northern Ireland , believing they would simply be used to quash nationalist protests against British rule . Livingstone stood as the leftist candidate for the Chair of the Lambeth Housing Committee in April 1973 , but was defeated by David Stimpson , who undid many of Livingstone and Carr 's reforms .

= = = Early years on the Greater London Council : 1973 ? 1977 = = =

In June 1972 , after a campaign orchestrated by Eddie Lopez , Livingstone was selected as the Labour candidate for Norwood in the Greater London Council ( GLC ) . In the 1973 GLC elections , he won the seat with 11 @, @ 622 votes , a firm lead over his Conservative rival . Led by Reg Goodwin , the GLC was dominated by Labour , who controlled 57 seats , compared to 33 controlled by the Conservatives and 2 by the Liberal Party . Of the Labour GLC members , around 16 , including Livingstone , were staunch leftists . Representing Norwood in the GLC , Livingstone continued as a Lambeth councillor and Vice Chairman of the Lambeth Housing Committee , criticising Lambeth council 's dealings with the borough 's homeless . Learning that the council had pursued a racist policy of allocating the best housing to white working @-@ class families , Livingstone went public with the evidence , which was published in the South London Press . In August 1973 , he publicly threatened to resign from the Lambeth Housing Committee if the council failed " to honour longstanding promises " to rehouse 76 homeless families then staying in dilapidated and overcrowded halfway accommodation . Frustrated at the council 's failure to achieve this , he resigned from the Housing Committee in December 1973 .

Considered a radical troublemaker by the GLC 's Labour management , Livingstone was allocated the relatively unimportant position of Vice Chairman of the Film Viewing Board , monitoring the release of soft pornography . Like most Board members , Livingstone opposed cinematic censorship , a view he changed with the increasing availability of violent pornography . With growing support from Labour leftists , in March 1974 he was elected onto the executive of the Greater London

Labour Party ( GLLP ) , responsible for drawing up the manifesto for the GLC Labour group and the lists of candidates for council and parliamentary seats . Turning his attention once more to housing , he became Vice Chairman of the GLC 's Housing Management Committee , however was sacked in April 1975 for his vocal opposition to the Goodwin administration 's decision to cut £ 50 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 from the GLC 's house @-@ building budget . Coming up to the 1977 GLC elections , Livingstone recognised the difficulty of retaining his Norwood seat , instead being selected for Hackney North and Stoke Newington , a Labour safe seat , following the retirement of David Pitt . Accused of being a " carpetbagger " , it ensured he was one of the few leftist Labour councillors to remain on the GLC , which fell into Conservative hands under Horace Cutler .

= = = Hampstead : 1977 ? 1980 = = =

Turning towards the Houses of Parliament , Livingstone and Christine moved to West Hampstead , north London ; in June 1977 he was selected by local party members as the Labour parliamentary candidate for the Hampstead constituency , beating Vince Cable . He gained notoriety in the Hampstead and Highgate Express for publicly reaffirming his support for the controversial issue of LGBT rights , declaring he supported the reduction of the age of consent for male same @-@ sex activity from 21 to 16 , in line with the different @-@ sex age of consent . Becoming active in the politics of the London Borough of Camden , Livingstone was elected Chair of Camden 's Housing Committee ; putting forward radical reforms , he democratized council housing meetings by welcoming local people , froze rents for a year , reformed the rate collection system , changed rent arrears procedures and implemented further compulsory purchase orders to increase council housing . Criticised by some senior colleagues as incompetent and excessively ambitious , some accused him of encouraging leftists to move into the borough 's council housing to increase his local support base .

In 1979 , internal crisis rocked Labour as activist group , the Campaign for Labour Democracy , struggled with the Parliamentary Labour Party for a greater say in party management . Livingstone joined the activists , on 15 July 1978 helping unify small hard left groups as the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory ( SCLV ) . Producing a sporadically published paper , Socialist Organiser , as a mouthpiece for Livingstone 's views , it criticised Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan as " anti @-@ working class " . In January 1979 , Britain was hit by a series of public sector worker strikes that came to be known as the " Winter of Discontent . " In Camden Borough , council employees unionised under the National Union of Public Employees ( NUPE ) went on strike , demanding a 35 @-@ hour limit to their working week and a weekly wage increase to £ 60 . Livingstone backed the strikers , urging Camden Council to grant their demands , eventually getting his way . District auditor Ian Pickwell , a government @-@ appointed accountant who monitored council finances , claimed that this move was reckless and illegal , taking Camden Council to court . If found guilty , Livingstone would have been held personally responsible for the measure , forced to pay the massive surcharge , and been disqualified for public office for five years ; ultimately the judge threw out the case .

In May 1979 , a general election was held in the United Kingdom . Standing as Labour candidate for Hampstead , Livingstone was defeated by the incumbent Conservative , Geoffrey Finsberg . Weakened by the Winter of Discontent , Callaghan 's government lost to the Conservatives , whose leader , Margaret Thatcher , became Prime Minister . A staunch right winger and free market advocate , she became a bitter opponent of the labour movement and Livingstone . Following the electoral defeat , Livingstone told Socialist Organiser that the blame lay solely with the " Labour government 's policies " and the anti @-@ democratic attitude of Callaghan and the Parliamentary Labour Party , calling for greater party democracy and a turn towards a socialist platform . This was a popular message among many Labour activists amassed under the SCLV . The primary figurehead for this leftist trend was Tony Benn , who narrowly missed being elected deputy leader of Labour in September 1981 , under new party leader Michael Foot . The head of the " Bennite left " , Benn became " an inspiration and a prophet " to Livingstone ; the two became the best known left @-@ wingers in Labour .

= = Greater London Council leadership = =

= = = Becoming leader of the GLC : 1979 ? 1981 = = =

Inspired by the Bennites , Livingstone planned a GLC take @-@ over ; on 18 October 1979 , he called a meeting of Labour leftists entitled " Taking over the GLC " , beginning publication of monthly newsletter the London Labour Briefing . Focused on increasing leftist power in the London Labour Party , he urged socialists to stand as candidates in the upcoming GLC election . When the time came to choose who would lead London Labour in that election , Livingstone put his name down , but was challenged by the moderate Andrew McIntosh ; in the April 1980 vote , McIntosh beat Livingstone by 14 votes to 13 . In September 1980 , Livingstone separated from his wife Christine , though they remained amicable . Moving into a small flat at 195 Randolph Avenue , Maida Vale with his pet reptiles and amphibians , he divorced in October 1982 and began a relationship with Kate Allen , chair of Camden Council Women 's Committee .

Livingstone turned his attention to achieving a GLC Labour victory , exchanging his safe @-@ seat in Hackney North for the marginal Inner London seat at Paddington ; in May 1981 he won the seat by 2 @,@ 397 votes . Cutler and the Conservatives learned of Livingstone 's plans , proclaiming that a GLC Labour victory would lead to a Marxist takeover of London and then Britain ; the rightist press picked up the story , with the Daily Express using the headline of " Why We Must Stop These Red Wreckers " . Such scaremongering was ineffective , and the GLC election of May 1981 was a Labour victory , with McIntosh installed as Head of the GLC ; within 24 hours he would be deposed by members of his own party , replaced by Livingstone .

On 7 May , Livingstone called a caucus of his supporters ; announcing his intent to challenge McIntosh 's leadership , he invited those assembled to stand for other GLC posts . The meeting ended at 4 : 45pm having agreed on a full slate of candidates . At 5 o 'clock , McIntosh held a GLC Labour meeting ; the attendees called an immediate leadership election , in which Livingstone defeated him by 30 votes to 20 . The entire left caucus slate was then elected . The next day , a leftist coup deposed Sir Ashley Bramall on the Inner London Education Authority ( ILEA ) , replacing him with Bryn Davies ; the left group now controlled both the GLC and the ILEA .

McIntosh proclaimed the GLC coup illegitimate , asserting that Labour was in danger from a leftist take @-@ over . The mainstream right @-@ wing press criticised the coup ; the Daily Mail called Livingstone a " left wing extremist " , and The Sun nicknamed him " Red Ken " , stating his victory meant " full @-@ steam @-@ ahead red @-@ blooded Socialism for London . " The Financial Times issued a " warning " that leftists could use such tactics to take control of the government , when " the erosion of our democracy will surely begin . " Thatcher joined the rallying call , proclaiming that leftists like Livingstone had " no time for parliamentary democracy " , but were plotting " To impose upon this nation a tyranny which the peoples of Eastern Europe yearn to cast aside . "

= = = Leader of the GLC : 1981 ? 1983 = = =

Entering County Hall as GLC leader on 8 May 1981 , Livingstone initiated changes , converting the building 's Freemasonic temple into a meeting room and removing many of the privileges enjoyed by GLC members and senior officers . He initiated an open @-@ door policy allowing citizens to hold meetings in the committee rooms free of charge , with County Hall gaining the nickname of " the People 's Palace " . Livingstone took great pleasure watching the disgust expressed by some Conservative GLC members when non @-@ members began using the building 's restaurant . In the London Labour Briefing , Livingstone announced " London 's ours ! After the most vicious GLC election of all time , the Labour Party has won a working majority on a radical socialist programme . " He stated that their job was to " sustain a holding operation until such time as the Tory [ Conservative ] government can be brought down and replaced by a left @-@ wing Labour

government . " There was a perception among Livingstone 's allies that they constituted the genuine opposition to Thatcher 's government , with Foot 's Labour leadership dismissed as ineffectual ; they hoped Benn would soon replace him .

There was a widespread public perception that Livingstone 's GLC leadership was illegitimate , while the mainstream British media remained resolutely hostile to the hard left . Livingstone received the levels of national press attention normally reserved for senior Members of Parliament . A press interview was arranged with Max Hastings for the Evening Standard , in which Livingstone was portrayed as affable but ruthless . The Sun 's editor Kelvin MacKenzie took a particular interest in Livingstone , establishing a reporting team to ' dig up the dirt ' on him ; they were unable to uncover any scandalous information , focusing on his love of amphibians , a personality trait mocked by other media sources . The satirical journal Private Eye referred to him as " Ken Leninspart " after Vladimir Lenin , proceeding to erroneously claim that Livingstone received funding from the Libyan Jamahiriya ; suing them for libel , in November 1983 the journal apologised , awarding Livingstone £ 15 @ , @ 000 in damages in an out @ - @ of @ - @ court settlement .

During 1982 , Livingstone made new appointments to the GLC governance , with John McDonnell appointed key chair of finance and Valerie Wise chair of the new Women 's Committee , while Sir Ashley Bramall became GLC chairman and Tony McBrearty was appointed chair of housing . Others stayed in their former positions , including Dave Wetzel as transport chair and Mike Ward as chair of industry ; thus was created what biographer John Carvel described as " the second Livingstone administration " , leading to a " more calm and supportive environment " . Turning his attention once more to Parliament , Livingstone attempted to get selected as the Labour candidate for the constituency of Brent East , a place which he felt an " affinity " for and where several friends lived . At the time , the Brent East Labour Party was in strife as competing factions battled for control , with Livingstone attempting to gain the support of both the hard and soft left . Securing a significant level of support from local party members , he nonetheless failed to apply for candidacy in time , and so the incumbent centrist Reg Freeson was once more selected as Labour candidate for Brent East . A subsequent vote at the council meeting revealed that 52 local Labour members would have voted for Livingstone , with only 2 for Freeson and 3 abstentions . Nevertheless , in the United Kingdom general election , 1983 , Freeson went on to win the Brent East constituency for Labour . In 1983 , Livingstone began co @ - @ presenting a late night television chat show with Janet Street @ - @ Porter for London Weekend Television .

= = = = Fares Fair and transport policy = = = =

The Greater London Labour Manifesto for the 1981 elections , although written under McIntosh 's leadership , had been determined by a special conference of the London Labour Party in October 1980 in which Livingstone 's speech had been decisive on transport policy . The manifesto focused on job creation schemes and cutting London Transport fares , and it was to these issues that Livingstone 's administration turned . One primary manifesto focus had been a pledge known as Fares Fair , which focused on reducing London Underground fares and freezing them at that lower rate . Based on a fare freeze implemented by the South Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council in 1975 , it was widely considered to be a moderate and mainstream policy by Labour , which it was hoped would get more Londoners using public transport , thereby reducing congestion . In October 1981 , the GLC implemented their policy , cutting London Transport fares by 32 % ; to fund the move , the GLC planned to increase the London rates .

The legality of the Fares Fair policy was challenged by Dennis Barkway , Conservative leader of the London Borough of Bromley council , who complained that his constituents were having to pay for cheaper fares on the London Underground when it did not operate in their borough . Although the Divisional Court initially found in favour of the GLC , Bromley Borough took the issue to a court of appeal , where three judges ? Lord Denning , Lord Justice Oliver and Lord Justice Watkins ? reversed the previous decision , finding in favour of Bromley Borough on 10 November . They proclaimed that the Fares Fair policy was illegal because the GLC was expressly forbidden from choosing to run London Transport at a deficit , even if this was in the perceived interest of

Londoners . The GLC appealed this decision , taking the case to the House of Lords ; on 17 December five Law Lords unanimously ruled in favour of Bromley Borough Council , putting a permanent end to the Fares Fair policy . GLC transport chairman Dave Wetzel labelled the judges " Vandals in Ermine " while Livingstone maintained his belief that the judicial decision was politically motivated .

Initially presenting a motion to the GLC Labour groups that they refuse to comply with the judicial decision and continue with the policy regardless , but was out @-@ voted by 32 ? 22 ; many commentators claimed that Livingstone had only been bluffing in order to save face among the Labour Left . Instead , Livingstone got on board with a campaign known as " Keep Fares Fair " in order to bring about a change in the law that would make the Fares Fair policy legal ; an alternate movement , " Can 't Pay , Won 't Pay " , accused Livingstone of being a sell @-@ out and insisted that the GLC proceed with its policies regardless of their legality . One aspect of the London Transport reforms was however maintained ; the new system of flat fares within ticket zones , and the inter @-@ modal Travelcard ticket continues as the basis of the ticketing system . The GLC then put together new measures in the hope of reducing London Transport fares by the more modest amount of 25 % , taking them back to roughly the price that they were when Livingstone 's administration took office ; it was ruled legal in January 1983 , and subsequently implemented .

= = = = GLEB and nuclear disarmament = = = =

Livingstone 's administration founded the Greater London Enterprise Board ( GLEB ) to create employment by investing in the industrial regeneration of London , with the funds provided by the council , its workers ' pension fund and the financial markets . Livingstone later claimed that GLC bureaucrats obstructed much of what GLEB tried to achieve . Other policies implemented by the Labour Left also foundered . Attempts to prevent the sale @-@ off of GLC council housing largely failed , in part due to the strong opposition from the Conservative government . ILEA attempted to carry through with its promise to cut the price of school meals in the capital from 35p to 25p , but was forced to abandon its plans following legal advice that the councillors could be made to pay the surcharge and disqualified from public office .

The Livingstone administration took a strong stance on the issue of nuclear disarmament , proclaiming London a " nuclear @-@ free zone " . On 20 May 1981 , the GLC halted its annual spending of £ 1 million on nuclear war defence plans , with Livingstone 's deputy , Iltyd Harrington , proclaiming that " we are challenging ... the absurd cosmetic approach to Armageddon . " They published the names of the 3000 politicians and administrators who had been earmarked for survival in underground bunkers in the event of a nuclear strike on London . Thatcher 's government remained highly critical of these moves , putting out a propaganda campaign explaining their argument for the necessity of Britain 's nuclear deterrent to counter the Soviet Union .

= = = = Egalitarian policies = = = =

Livingstone 's administration advocated measures to improve the lives of minorities within London , who together made up a sizeable percentage of the city 's population ; what Reg Race called " the Rainbow Coalition " . The GLC allocated a small percentage of its expenditure on funding minority community groups , including the London Gay Teenage Group , English Collective of Prostitutes , Women Against Rape , Lesbian Line , A Woman 's Place , and Rights of Women . Believing these groups could initiate social change , the GLC increased its annual funding of voluntary organisations from £ 6 million in 1980 to £ 50 million in 1984 . They provided loans to such groups , coming under a barrage of press criticism for awarding a loan to the Sheba Feminist Publishers , whose works were widely labelled pornographic . In July 1981 , Livingstone founded the Ethnic Minorities Committee , the Police Committee , and the Gay and Lesbian Working Party , and in June 1982 , a Women 's Committee was also established . Believing the Metropolitan Police to be a racist organisation , he appointed Paul Boateng to head the Police Committee and monitor the force 's activities . Considering the police a highly political organisation , he publicly remarked that " When

you canvas police flats at election time , you find that they are either Conservatives who think of Thatcher as a bit of a pinko or they are National Front . "

The Conservatives and mainstream rightist press were largely critical of these measures , considering them symptomatic of what they derogatorily termed the " loony left " . Claiming that these only served " fringe " interests , their criticisms often exhibited racist , homophobic and sexist sentiment . A number of journalists fabricated stories designed to discredit Livingstone and the " loony left " , for instance claiming that the GLC made its workers drink only Nicaraguan coffee in solidarity with the country 's socialist government , and that Haringey Council leader Bernie Grant had banned the use of the term " black bin liner " and the rhyme " Baa Baa Black Sheep " because they were perceived as racially insensitive . Writing in 2008 , BBC reporter Andrew Hosken noted that although most of Livingstone 's GLC administration 's policies were ultimately a failure , its role in helping change social attitudes towards women and minorities in London remained its " enduring legacy " .

= = = Republicanism and Ireland = = =

Invited to the Wedding of Charles , Prince of Wales , and Lady Diana Spencer at St Paul 's Cathedral in July 1981 , Livingstone ? a republican critical of the monarchy ? wished the couple well but turned down the offer . He also permitted Irish republican protesters to hold a vigil on the steps of County Hall throughout the wedding celebrations , both actions that enraged the press . His administration supported the People 's March for Jobs , a demonstration of 500 anti @-@ unemployment protesters who marched to London from Northern England , allowing them to sleep in County Hall and catering for them . Costing £ 19 @,@ 000 , critics argued that Livingstone was illegally using public money for his own political causes . The GLC orchestrated a propaganda campaign against Thatcher 's government , in January 1982 erecting a sign on the top of County Hall ? clearly visible from the Houses of Parliament ? stating the number of unemployed in London .

In September 1981 , Livingstone began production of weekly newspaper , the Labour Herald , co @-@ edited with Ted Knight and Matthew Warburton . It was published by a press owned by the Trotskyist Workers Revolutionary Party ( WRP ) , who had financed it with funding from Libya and Iraq . Livingstone 's commercial relationship with WRP leader Gerry Healy was controversial among British socialists , many of whom disapproved of Healy 's violent nature . The Labour Herald folded in 1985 , when Healy was exposed as a sex offender and ousted from the WRP 's leadership .

A supporter of Irish reunification , Livingstone had connections with the left @-@ wing Irish republican party Sinn Féin and in July , met with the mother of an imprisoned Provisional Irish Republican Army ( IRA ) militant Thomas McElwee , then taking part in the 1981 Irish hunger strike . That day , Livingstone publicly proclaimed his support for those prisoners on hunger strike , claiming that the British government 's fight against the IRA was not " some sort of campaign against terrorism " but was " the last colonial war . " He was heavily criticised for this meeting and his statements in the mainstream press , while Prime Minister Thatcher claimed that his comments constituted " the most disgraceful statement I have ever heard . " Soon after , he also met with the children of Yvonne Dunlop , an Irish Protestant who had been killed in McElwee 's bomb attack .

On 10 October , the IRA bombed London 's Chelsea Barracks , killing 2 and injuring 40 . Denouncing the attack , Livingstone informed members of the Cambridge University Tory Reform Group that it was a misunderstanding to view the IRA as " criminals or lunatics " because of their strong political motives and that " violence will recur again and again as long as we are in Ireland . " Mainstream press criticised him for these comments , with The Sun labeling him " the most odious man in Britain " . In response , Livingstone proclaimed that the press coverage had been " ill @-@ founded , utterly out of context and distorted " , reiterating his opposition both to IRA attacks and British rule in Northern Ireland . Anti @-@ Livingstone pressure mounted and on 15 October he was publicly attacked in the street by members of unionist militia , The Friends of Ulster . In a second incident , Livingstone was attacked by far right skinheads shouting " commie bastard " at the Three Horseshoes Pub in Hampstead . Known as " Green Ken " among Ulster Unionists , Unionist paramilitary Michael Stone of the Ulster Defence Association plotted to kill Livingstone , only



abandoning the plan when he became convinced that the security services were onto him .

Livingstone agreed to meet Gerry Adams , Sinn Féin President and IRA @-@ supporter , after Adams was invited to London by Labour members of the Troops Out campaign in December 1982 . The same day as the invitation was made , the Irish National Liberation Army ( INLA ) bombed The Droppin Well bar in Ballykelly , County Londonderry , killing 11 soldiers and 6 civilians ; in the aftermath , Livingstone was pressured to cancel the meeting . Expressing his horror at the bombing , Livingstone insisted that the meeting proceed , for Adams had no connection with the INLA , but Conservative Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw banned Adams ' entry to Britain with the 1976 Prevention of Terrorism ( Temporary Provisions ) Act . In February 1983 , Livingstone visited Adams in his constituency of West Belfast , receiving a hero 's welcome from local republicans . In July 1983 , Adams finally came to London on the invite of Livingstone and MP Jeremy Corbyn , allowing him to present his views to a mainstream British audience through televised interviews . In August , Livingstone was interviewed on Irish state radio , proclaiming that Britain 's 800 @-@ year occupation of Ireland was more destructive than the Holocaust ; he was publicly criticised by Labour members and the press . He also controversially expressed solidarity with the Marxist ? Leninist government of Fidel Castro in Cuba against the U.S. economic embargo , in turn receiving an annual Christmas gift of Cuban rum from the Cuban embassy .

Courting further controversy , in the Falklands War of 1982 , during which the United Kingdom battled Argentina for control of the Falkland Islands , Livingstone stated his belief that the islands rightfully belonged to the Argentinian people , but not the military junta then ruling the country . Upon British victory , he sarcastically remarked that " Britain had finally been able to beat the hell out of a country smaller , weaker and even worse governed than we were . " Challenging the Conservative government 's militarism , the GLC proclaimed 1983 to be " Peace Year " , solidifying ties with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament ( CND ) in order to advocate international nuclear disarmament , a measure opposed by the Thatcher government . In keeping with this pacifistic outlook , they banned the Territorial Army from marching past County Hall that year . The GLC then proclaimed 1984 to be " Anti @-@ Racism Year " . In July 1985 , the GLC twinned London with the Nicaraguan city of Managua , then under the control of the socialist Sandinista National Liberation Front . The press also continued to criticise the Livingstone administration 's funding of volunteer groups that they perceived represented only " fringe interests " . As Livingstone biographer Andrew Hosken remarked , " by far the most contentious grant " was given in February 1983 to a group called Babies Against the Bomb , founded by a group of mothers who had united to campaign against nuclear weapons .

Members of the London Labour groups chastised Livingstone for his controversial statements , believing them detrimental to the party , leading Labour members and supporters to defect to the Social Democratic Party ( SDP ) . Many highlighted Labour 's failure to secure the seat in the Croydon North West by @-@ election , 1981 as a sign of Labour 's prospects under Livingstone . Some called for Livingstone 's removal , but Michael Foot 's Trotskyist assistant Una Cooze defended Livingstone 's position to her boss . Television and radio outlets welcomed Livingstone on for interviews ; described by biographer John Carvel as having " one of the best television styles of any contemporary politician " , Livingstone used this medium to speak to a wider audience , gaining widespread public support , something Carvell attributed to his " directness , self @-@ deprecation , colourful language , complete unflappability under fire and lack of pomposity " , coupled with popular policies like Fares Fair .

= = = Abolition of the GLC : 1983 ? 1986 = = =

The 1983 general election proved disastrous for Labour , as much of their support went to the Social Democrat @-@ Liberal Alliance , and Thatcher entered her second term in office . Foot was replaced by Neil Kinnock , a man Livingstone considered " repellent " . Livingstone publicly attributed Labour 's electoral failure to the leading role that the party 's capitalist wing had played , arguing that the party should promote a socialist program of " national reconstruction " , overseeing the nationalisation of banks and major industry and allowing for the investment in new development

Considering it a waste of rate payer 's money , Thatcher 's government was keen to abolish the GLC and devolve control to the Greater London boroughs , stating its intention to do so in its 1983 electoral manifesto . Secretary of State for Employment Norman Tebbit lambasted the GLC as " Labour @-@ dominated , high @-@ spending and at odds with the government 's view of the world " ; Livingstone commented that there was " a huge gulf between the cultural values of the GLC Labour group and everything that Mrs Thatcher considered right and proper . " The government felt confident that there was sufficient opposition to Livingstone 's administration that they could abolish the GLC : according to a MORI poll in April 1983 , 58 % of Londoners were dissatisfied and 26 % satisfied with Livingstone .

Attempting to fight the proposals , the GLC devoted £ 11 million to a campaign led by Reg Race focusing on press campaigning , advertising , and parliamentary lobbying . The campaign sent Livingstone on a party roadshow conference in which he convinced the Liberal and Social Democratic parties to oppose abolition . Using the slogan " say no to no say " , they publicly highlighted that without the GLC , London would be the only capital city in Western Europe without a directly elected body . The campaign was successful , with polls indicating majority support among Londoners for retaining the Council , and in March 1984 , 20 @,@ 000 public servants held a 24 @-@ hour strike in support . The government nevertheless remained committed to abolition , and in June 1984 the House of Commons passed the Local Government Act 1985 with 237 votes in favour and 217 against . Livingstone and three senior GLC members resigned their seats in August 1984 , to force byelections on the issue of abolition , but the Conservatives declined to contest them and all four were comfortably re @-@ elected on a low turnout .

The GLC was formally abolished at midnight on 31 March 1986 , with Livingstone marking the occasion by holding a free concert at Festival Hall . In his capacity as former leader of the GLC , Livingstone was invited to visit Australia , Israel , and Zimbabwe in the following months by leftist groups in those countries , before he and Allen undertook a 5 @-@ week Himalayan trek to the base camp of Mount Everest .

= = Member of Parliament = =

Livingstone defeated Reg Freeson to represent Labour for the north @-@ west London constituency of Brent East in the 1987 general election . When the election came , he narrowly defeated Conservative candidate Harriet Crawley to become Brent East 's MP , while Thatcher retained the Premiership for a third term . Livingstone found the atmosphere of the Houses of Parliament uncomfortable , labeling it " absolutely tribal " , and asserting that " It 's like working in the Natural History Museum , except not all the exhibits are stuffed . " There was much hostility between him and the Parliamentary Labour Party , who allocated him a windowless office with fellow leftist MP Harry Barnes . He took on Maureen Charleson as his personal secretary , who would remain with him for the next 20 years .

In his maiden speech to Parliament in July 1987 , Livingstone used parliamentary privilege to raise a number of allegations made by Fred Holroyd , a former Special Intelligence Service operative in Northern Ireland . Despite the convention of maiden speeches being non @-@ controversial , Livingstone alleged that Holroyd had been mistreated when he tried to expose MI5 collusion with Ulster loyalist paramilitaries in the 1970s . Thatcher denounced his claims as " utterly contemptible " . In September 1987 Livingstone was elected to Labour 's National Executive Committee ( NEC ) , although was voted off in October 1989 , to be replaced by John Prescott . As Kinnock tried to pull Labour to the centre , Livingstone worked to strengthen socialist elements in the party . He continued to make his opinions known , refusing to pay the controversial poll tax until it was revoked , and being one of the 55 Labour MPs to oppose British involvement in the Gulf War in January 1991 . Conversely , he supported NATO intervention in the Balkans , and the bombing of Serbia .

In the 1992 general election , John Major led the Conservatives to a narrow victory , resulting in Kinnock 's resignation as head of Labour . Livingstone put his name forward as a proposed replacement , with Bernie Grant as his deputy , although they were not selected , with John Smith

and Margaret Beckett taking the positions instead . After Smith died in May 1994 , Livingstone again put his name down as a potential leader , although withdrew it due to a lack of support . Instead , Tony Blair was selected , with Livingstone predicting that he would be " the most right @-@ wing leader " in Labour history . Blair and his supporters sought to reform the party by further expunging leftist elements and taking it to the centre ground , thus creating " New Labour " , with Blairite Peter Mandelson asserting that hard left figures like Livingstone represented " the enemy " of reform . Throughout 1995 , Livingstone unsuccessfully fought Blair 's attempts to remove Clause Four ( promoting nationalised industry ) from the Labour constitution , which he saw as a betrayal of the party 's socialist roots . In 1996 , he warned of the growing influence of spin doctors in the party , and called for Blair to sack Alastair Campbell after a High Court judge criticised him in a libel trial . Nevertheless , Blair 's reforms led Labour to a landslide victory in the 1997 general election , resulting in the formation of the first Labour government since 1979 . In December 1997 , Livingstone joined a Labour revolt against Blair 's attempts to cut benefits to single mothers , and in March 1998 publicly criticised Gordon Brown for advocating " an awful lot of Thatcherite nonsense " and attempting to privatise the London Underground through the PPP scheme . However , in 1997 he was re @-@ elected to the NEC , beating Mandelson to the position .

Livingstone continued his association with members of Trotskyite group Socialist Action , with the group 's leader John Ross became his most important adviser , teaching him about economics . Investing in an advanced £ 25 @,@ 000 computer , he and Ross used the machine to undertake complex economic analysis , on the basis of which they began publishing the Socialist Economic Bulletin in 1990 . Two other members of the group , Redmond O 'Neill and Simon Fletcher , also became trusted advisers . When Socialist Action founded a campaign group , the Anti @-@ Racist Alliance , Livingstone came to be closely associated with it . They campaigned around the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence and the rise of the far right British National Party , but were disadvantaged by an ongoing rivalry with the Anti @-@ Nazi League .

As his political significance waned , Livingstone gained more work in the media , commenting that the press " started to use me only once they thought I was harmless " . To receive these outside earnings , he founded a company known as Localaction Ltd . In 1987 he authored an autobiography for HarperCollins , If Voting Changed Anything They 'd Abolish It , conducted journalism for the London Daily News , stood in for BBC Radio 2 disk @-@ jockey Jimmy Young , and served as a judge for that year 's Whitbread Prize . In 1989 , Unwin Hyman published his second book , Livingstone 's Labour : A Programme for the 90s , in which he expressed his views on a variety of issues , while that same year he was employed to promote Red Leicester cheese in adverts for the National Dairy Council and to appear in adverts for British Coal alongside Edwina Currie . In October 1991 Livingstone began writing a column for Rupert Murdoch 's right @-@ wing tabloid The Sun , a controversial move among British socialists . In his column he often discussed his love of amphibians and campaigned for the protection of the great crested newt , on the basis of which he was appointed vice president of the London Zoological Society in 1996 ? 97 . He subsequently began to write a food column for Esquire and then The Evening Standard , also making regular appearances on the BBC quiz show Have I Got News For You ? . In 1995 , Livingstone was invited to appear on the track " Ernold Same " by the band Blur .

= = Mayor of London = =

= = = Mayoral election : 2000 = = =

By 1996 , various prominent public figures were arguing for the implementation of directly @-@ elected mayors for large UK cities like London . The idea of a London mayor of a Greater London Authority had been included in Labour 's 1997 election manifesto , and after their election a referendum was scheduled for May 1998 , in which there was a 72 % yes vote with a 34 % turnout . With the first mayoral election scheduled for May 2000 , in March 1998 Livingstone stated his intention to stand as a potential Labour candidate for the position .

Blair did not want Livingstone as London Mayor , claiming the latter was one of those who " almost knocked [ the party ] over the edge of the cliff into extinction " during the 1980s . He and the Labour spin doctors organised a campaign against Livingstone to ensure that he was not selected , with Campbell and Sally Morgan unsuccessfully attempting to get Oona King to denounce Livingstone . They failed to convince Mo Mowlam to stand for the mayorship , and instead encouraged the reluctant Frank Dobson to stand . Recognising that a ' one member , one vote ' election within the London Labour Party would probably see Livingstone selected over Dobson , Blair ensured that a third of the votes would come from the rank @-@ and @-@ file members , a third from the trade unions , and a third from Labour MPs and MEPs , the latter two of which he could pressure into voting for his own preferred candidate , something that Dobson was deeply uncomfortable with . Information on the Blairite campaign against Livingstone became public , costing Dobson much support ; nevertheless , due to the impact of the MPs and MEPs , Dobson won the candidacy with 51 % to Livingstone 's 48 % .

Livingstone proclaimed Dobson to be " a tainted candidate " and stated his intention to run for the Mayoralty as an independent candidate . Aware that this would result in his expulsion from Labour , he publicly stated that " I have been forced to choose between the party I love and upholding the democratic rights of Londoners . " The polls indicated clear support for Livingstone among the London electorate , with his campaign being run by his Socialist Action associates . He gained the support of a wide range of celebrities , from musicians like Fatboy Slim , Pink Floyd , the Chemical Brothers , and Blur , artists like Damian Hirst and Tracey Emin , and those from other fields , among them Ken Loach , Jo Brand , and Chris Evans , the latter of whom donated £ 200 @,@ 000 to the campaign ; half of what Livingstone required . In March 2000 , Livingstone agreed to make a public apology to the House of Commons , after he was criticised over his failure to properly register outside interests worth more than £ 150 @,@ 000 . The election took place in May 2000 , at which Livingstone came first with 58 % of first and second @-@ preference votes ; Conservative candidate Steven Norris came second and Dobson third . Livingstone started his acceptance speech with " As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted 14 years ago ... "

= = = First mayoral term : 2000 ? 04 = = =

Livingstone now had " the largest and most direct mandate of any politician in British history " , receiving an annual salary of £ 87 @,@ 000 . It was the Mayor 's job to oversee a number of subordinate bodies , including the Metropolitan Police , Transport for London ( TfL ) , the London Development Agency , and the London Fire Brigade , and in doing so he was granted a number of executive powers . He would be scrutinised by the elected London Assembly , whose first chairman was Trevor Phillips , a Labour politician who had a reciprocated dislike of Livingstone . Livingstone was permitted twelve principal advisers , many of whom were members of Socialist Action or people whom he had worked with on the GLC . Ross and Fletcher became two of his closest confidants , with Livingstone commenting that " They aren 't just my closest political advisers ... they 're also mostly my best friends . " In 2002 , he promoted six of his senior aides , resulting in allegations of cronyism from Assembly members . The Mayoral office was initially based in temporary headquarters at Romney House in Marsham Street , Westminster , while a purpose @-@ built building was constructed in Southwark ; termed City Hall , it was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in July 2002 , with Livingstone commenting that it resembled a " glass testicle . "

Much of Livingstone 's first two years were devoted to setting up the Mayoral system and administration . He also devoted much time to battling New Labour 's plans to upgrade the London Underground system through a public ? private partnership ( PPP ) program , believing it to be too expensive and tantamount to the privatisation of a state @-@ owned service . He furthermore had strong concerns about safety ; PPP would divide different parts of the Underground among various companies , something that he argued threatened a holistic safety and maintenance program . These concerns were shared by the National Union of Rail , Maritime and Transport Workers ( RMT ) and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen ( ASLEF ) trade union , who went on strike over the issue , being joined on the picket line by Livingstone . Appointing Bob Kiley

as transport commissioner , the duo argued that the upgrade should be carried out in state hands through a public bond issue , as had been done in the case of the New York City Subway . They launched court cases against the government over PPP in 2001 ? 02 , but were ultimately unsuccessful , and the project went ahead , with the Underground being privatised in January 2003 .

Although he had initially stated that he would not do so , Livingstone 's administration sought to phase out use of the Routemaster buses , the design for which dated to the 1950s . Although iconic , they were deemed hazardous and responsible for a high number of deaths and serious injuries as passengers climbed onto them , also being non @-@ wheelchair accessible and thus not meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 . The process was gradual , with the last Routemaster being decommissioned in December 2005 . The Routemasters were replaced by a new fleet of 103 articulated buses , known colloquially as " bendy buses " , which were launched in June 2002 . While the Routemasters fitted 80 people on at one time , the articulated buses fitted up to 140 passengers , however they were deemed dangerous for cyclists . Attempting to reduce London 's environmental impact , Livingstone created the London Hydrogen Partnership and the London Energy Partnership in his first term as Mayor of London . The Mayor 's Energy Strategy , " green light to clean power , " committed London to reducing its emissions of carbon dioxide by 20 % , relative to the 1990 level , by 2010 .

Livingstone sought to remove the pigeons from Trafalgar Square ; he tried to evict seed sellers and introduced hawks to scare the pigeons off . He pedestrianised the north side of the Square , transforming it into a public space with a cafe , public toilets , and a lift for the disabled . He introduced an annual Saint Patrick 's Day festival to celebrate the contributions of the Irish to London , and revived London 's free anti @-@ racism music festival , now called Rise : London United , later attributing London 's 35 % decrease in racist attacks to this and other anti @-@ racist policies . Continuing his support for LGBT rights , in 2001 he set up Britain 's first register for same @-@ sex couples ; while falling short of legal marriage rights , the register was seen as a step towards the Civil Partnership Act 2004 .

Livingstone 's relationship with Kate Allen ended in November 2001 , although they remained friends . He then started a relationship with Emma Beal , together having two children , Thomas ( born December 2002 ) and Mia ( born March 2004 ) . At a May 2002 party in Tufnell Park , Livingstone got into an argument with Beal 's friend Robin Hedges , a reporter for The Evening Standard . Beal subsequently fell off of a wall and bruised his ribs ; the press claimed that Livingstone had pushed him , although he insisted that he did not . Liberal Democrats on the London Assembly referred the matter to the Standards Board for England , who ruled that there was no evidence for any wrongdoing on Livingstone 's behalf .

As proposed in their election manifesto , in February 2003 Livingstone 's administration introduced a congestion charge covering 8 square miles in central London , charging motorists £ 5 a day for driving through the area . It was introduced in an attempt to deter traffic and reduce congestion ; Livingstone himself took the London Underground to work , and tried to inspire more Londoners to use public transport rather than cars . The policy was highly controversial , and strongly opposed by businesses , resident groups , the roads lobby , and the Labour government ; many commentators recognised that if opposition resulted in the policy being abandoned then it could lead to the end of Livingstone 's political career . That year , the Political Studies Association named Livingstone ' Politician of the Year ' due to his implementation of the ' bold and imaginative ' scheme . The scheme resulted in a marked reduction on traffic in central London , resulting in improved bus services , and by 2007 , TfL could claim that the charge had reduced congestion by 20 % . To further encourage the use of public transport , in June 2003 , the Oyster card system was introduced , while bus and Underground journeys were made free for people aged 11 to 18 .

In 2002 , Livingstone came out in support of a proposal for the 2012 Olympic Games to be held in London . He insisted however that the Games must be held in the East End , and result in an urban regeneration program centred on the Lee Valley . He gained the support of Labour 's culture secretary Tessa Jowell , who convinced the government to back the plans in May 2003 . In May 2004 , the International Olympic Commission put London on the shortlist of potential locations for

the Games , alongside Paris , Madrid , Moscow , and New York City ; although Paris was widely expected to be the eventual victor , London would prove successful in its nomination . Another major development project was launched in February 2004 as the London Plan , in which Livingstone 's administration laid out their intentions to deal with the city 's major housing shortage by ensuring the construction of 30 @, @ 000 new homes a year . It stressed that 50 % of these should be deemed " affordable housing " although later critics would highlight that in actuality , the amount of " affordable housing " in these new constructions did not exceed 30 % .

Livingstone had no control over government policy regarding immigration , which had resulted in a significant growth in foreign arrivals coming to London during his administration ; from 2000 to 2005 London 's population grew by 200 @, @ 000 to reach 7 @. @ 5 million . He didn 't oppose this , encouraging racial equality and celebrating the city 's multiculturalism . Livingstone condemned the UK 's involvement in the Iraq War and involved himself in the Stop the War campaign . In November 2003 , he made headlines for referring to US President George W. Bush as " the greatest threat to life on this planet , " just before Bush 's official visit to the UK . Livingstone also organised an alternative " Peace Reception " at City Hall " for everybody who is not George Bush , " with anti @- @ war Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic as the guest of honour .

Livingstone 's success with the congestion charge and rejuvenation of Trafalgar Square led the Labour leadership to reconsider their position on him , with Blair re @- @ admitting him to the party and asking that he stand as their Mayoral candidate for the 2004 election . Livingstone eagerly agreed , and Labour Mayoral candidate Nicky Gavron volunteered to take a subordinate position as his deputy . In campaigning for the election , Livingstone highlighted his record : the congestion charge , free bus travel for under 11s , 1000 extra buses , and 5000 extra police officers , whereas his main competitor , the Conservative Steve Norris , campaigned primarily on a policy of abolishing the congestion charge . Livingstone continued to court controversy throughout the campaign ; in June 2004 he was quoted on The Guardian 's website as saying : " I just long for the day I wake up and find that the Saudi Royal Family are swinging from lamp @- @ posts and they 've got a proper government that represents the people of Saudi Arabia " , for which he was widely criticised . That same month he came under criticism from sectors of the left for urging RMT members to cross picket lines in a proposed Underground strike because the latest offer had been " extremely generous " , leading RMT general secretary Bob Crow to step down as a TfL board member . In the London mayoral election , 2004 , Livingstone was announced as the winner on 10 June 2004 . He won 36 % of first preference votes to Norris 's 28 % and Liberal Democrat Simon Hughes 's 15 % . When all the candidates except Livingstone and Norris were eliminated and the second preferences of those voters who had picked neither Livingstone or Norris as their first choice were counted , Livingstone won with 55 % to Norris 's 45 % .

= = = Second mayoral term : 2004 ? 08 = = =

Amid the War on Terror and threat from Al Qaeda , Livingstone sought to build closer ties to the London 's Muslim community , controversially agreeing to meet with Islamist groups like the Muslim Association of Britain alongside moderate organisations . In July 2004 , he attended a conference discussing France 's ban on the burka at which he talked alongside Islamist cleric Yusuf al @- @ Qaradawi . Livingstone described al @- @ Qaradawi as " one of the most authoritative Muslim scholars in the world today " and argued that his influence could help stop the radicalisation of young British Muslims . The move was controversial , with Jewish and LGBT organisations criticising Livingstone , citing al @- @ Qaradawi 's record of anti @- @ Semitic and homophobic remarks , with the meeting leading to a publicised argument between Livingstone and his former supporter Peter Tatchell . Livingstone continued to champion the Palestinian cause in the Israel @- @ Palestine conflict , in March 2005 accusing Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of being a " war criminal " responsible for the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre .

During his second term , Livingstone continued his support for London 's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games , playing a crucial role in securing vital Russian support for the bid . On 6 July 2005 , in a ceremony held in Singapore attended by Livingstone , London was announced as the victor ,

resulting in widespread celebration . The following day , British @-@ born Islamist suicide bombers undertook three attacks on the Underground and another on a bus , killing 52 civilians . Livingstone gave a speech from Singapore denouncing the attackers as terrorists , before immediately returning to London . Informing the BBC that Western foreign policy was largely to blame for the attacks , his response to the situation was widely praised , even by opponents . Fearing an Islamophobic backlash against the city 's Muslim minority , he initiated an advertising campaign to counter this , holding a rally for inter @-@ community unity in Trafalgar Square . A second , failed suicide bombing attack took place on 21 July , and in the aftermath police officers shot dead a Brazilian tourist , Jean Charles de Menezes , whom they mistook for a bomber . Police initially lied about the killing , resulting in widespread condemnation , although Livingstone defended the actions of Metropolitan Police commissioner Ian Blair .

After Livingstone left a party in February 2005 , Oliver Finegold , a reporter for the Evening Standard , attempted to ask Livingstone a question in the street . Aware that Finegold was Jewish , Livingstone accused him of acting " just like a concentration camp guard " and asserting that he worked for the " reactionary bigots ... who supported fascism " at the Daily Mail . Although the Evening Standard initially did not deem the comments newsworthy , they were leaked to The Guardian , resulting in accusations of anti @-@ Semitism against Livingstone from the Board of Deputies of British Jews . There were many calls for Livingstone to apologise , including from Tony Blair , the London Assembly , a Holocaust survivors group and his deputy Gavron ( the daughter of a Holocaust survivor ) , but Livingstone refused . The Standards Board for England asked the Adjudication Panel for England to deal with Livingstone on the issue , who in February 2006 found him guilty of bringing his office into disrepute and suspended him from office for a month . The decision was controversial , with Livingstone and many others arguing that an unelected board should not have the power to suspend an elected official . In October 2006 at the High Court of Justice , Justice Collins overturned the decision to suspend Livingstone .

Although he had alienated much of London 's Jewish community , Livingstone denied charges of anti @-@ Semitism , holding regular meetings with the city 's Jewish groups and introducing public Hanukkah celebrations in Trafalgar Square in December 2005 . He came under further accusations of anti @-@ semitism in March 2006 for asserting that the businessmen David and Simon Reuben should return to Iran if they did not like Britain ; he claimed he had mistakenly believed them to be Iranian Muslims , whereas in reality they were Indian Jews . He refused to apologise to the Reubens , instead offering " a complete apology to the people of Iran for the suggestion that they may be linked in any way to the Reuben brothers " .

In March 2006 , Livingstone publicly criticised foreign embassies in London who refused to pay the congestion charge under the conditions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations . His criticism focused on US diplomat Robert Tuttle , condemning him as a " chiselling little crook " whose embassy was refusing to pay the £ 1 @.@ 5 million he believed it owed . In February 2007 , Livingstone 's administration doubled the congestion charge zone by extending it westwards into Kensington and Chelsea , despite opposition from resident groups . In October 2007 , the government agreed to go ahead with Crossrail , a £ 16 billion project to construct a train line under central London , linking Berkshire to Essex . Meanwhile , Livingstone felt vindicated in his former opposition to public private partnership when one of the companies who now controlled part of the Underground , Metronet , collapsed in July 2007 , with the state having to intervene to protect the service . Livingstone had also welcomed the construction of skyscrapers in London , giving the go ahead for 15 to be constructed during his Mayoralty , including 30 St Mary Axe and The Shard . He considered it necessary to fill the demand for office space , but was criticised by groups and individuals , most notably Charles , Prince of Wales , concerned about the preservation of historic skylines .

In May 2006 , Livingstone welcomed Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez to London , hosting an event for him at City Hall . This was condemned by various Conservatives claiming that Chávez 's democratic socialist government had undermined pluralistic democracy . Livingstone proceeded to accept the presidency of the pro @-@ Chávez Venezuelan Information Centre . In November 2006 , Livingstone travelled to Latin America to visit Chávez , during which he and his entourage stayed in

Cuba at a cost of £ 29 @, @ 000 ; many British sources condemned the visit as a waste of tax @-@ payer 's money . In August 2007 , it was announced that Livingstone had come to an agreement with oil @-@ rich Venezuela ; Chávez 's government would supply £ 16 million a year worth of free oil to TfL , who would use it to subsidise half priced bus fares for 250 @, @ 000 Londoners on benefits . In return , London would provide expertise in running transport , as well as other services such as CCTV and waste management .

Livingstone helped organise the first " Eid in the Square " event at Trafalgar Square in commemoration of the Islamic Eid ul @-@ Fitr festival in October 2006 . In May 2007 , Livingstone travelled to New York City to attend the C40 conference of major world cities to deal with environmental issues . One of the leading figures of the conference , he called for other cities to adopt congestion charging as an environmental measure . In August 2007 , he issued a public apology on behalf of London for its role in the transatlantic slave trade . He selected the anniversary of the Haitian Revolution on which to do it , and in his tearful speech asserted that it was the resistance of enslaved persons rather than the philanthropy of wealthy whites that led to the trade 's end .

A week later he attended the unveiling of the statue of Nelson Mandela in Parliament Square , where he met with Nelson Mandela . In June 2007 , he criticised the planned £ 200 million Thames Water Desalination Plant at Beckton , which will be the United Kingdom 's first , calling it " misguided and a retrograde step in UK environmental policy " , and that " we should be encouraging people to use less water , not more . " In October 2007 , London Councils stated Livingstone had gone back on his promise to chair the developing London Waste and Recycling Board , and to provide £ 6 million of funding for the project , because " the government had failed to provide him with absolute control of the Board . "

Livingstone intended to stand again as Labour candidate in the London Mayoral election , 2008 , this time against Conservative candidate Boris Johnson . At the start of the campaign Livingstone took Johnson more seriously than many others were doing , referring to him as " the most formidable opponent I will face in my political career . " Much of Labour 's campaign revolved around criticising Johnson for perceived racist and homophobic comments that he had made in the past , although Johnson strenuously denied that he was bigoted . Livingstone also proposed that if he were to win a third term he would increase the congestion charge fee to £ 25 for the most polluting vehicles , while removing it for the least , and that he would also introduce a cycling scheme based on the Vélib ' system in Paris . As part of his campaign , Livingstone highlighted that by 2008 , the Metropolitan Police had 35 @, @ 000 officers , 10 @, @ 000 more than it had had in 2000 , also highlighting statistics to indicate falling crime rates across the city during his Mayorship . Nevertheless , there had been a recent rise in gang killing among young people , with 27 teenagers having been killed in gang warfare during 2007 , a statistic used by Johnson 's campaign who emphasised the idea that a Johnson administration would be far tougher on youth crime and anti @-@ social behaviour .

Further controversy rocked Livingstone 's campaign in December 2007 when Evening Standard journalist Andrew Gilligan alleged that one of Livingstone 's close advisers , Lee Jasper , had siphoned off at least £ 2 @. @ 5 million from the London Development Agency to fund black community groups with which he was closely associated . Livingstone stood by Jasper and claimed that the Evening Standard campaign was racist , but ultimately agreed to suspend Jasper while a full investigation took place . An independent report into the affair by District auditor Michael Haworth @-@ Maden in July 2009 found no evidence of " misappropriation of funds " but noted " significant " gaps in financial paperwork . The election took place in May 2008 , and witnessed a turnout of approximately 45 % of eligible voters , with Johnson receiving 43 @. @ 2 % and Livingstone 37 % of first @-@ preference votes ; when second @-@ preference votes were added , Johnson proved victorious with 53 @. @ 2 % to Livingstone 's 46 @. @ 8 % .

= = Post @-@ mayoral career = =



== = Unsuccessful election : 2008 ? 14 == =

Newly elected , Mayor Johnson paid tribute to Livingstone and his " very considerable achievements " , hoping that the new administration could " discover a way in which the mayoralty can continue to benefit from your transparent love of London " . Johnson 's administration nevertheless reversed a number of Livingstone 's policies , for instance overturning the deal for Venezuelan oil . Intent on giving Venezuela the " advice that we promised " , in August 2008 Livingstone announced that he would be advising urban planning in Caracas . Livingstone predicted that in twenty years it could become a " first @-@ world city " , and hoped to help with his " very extensive network of contacts both domestically and internationally " .

In January 2009 , Livingstone responded to the Gaza War by calling for the European Union and the UK to bring home their ambassadors to Israel to express disapproval for the " slaughter and systematic murder of innocent Arabs " . From September 2009 to March 2011 , Livingstone presented the book review programme Epilogue for the Iranian state @-@ sponsored international news channel Press TV , for which he came under criticism from Iranian exile groups . In July 2010 , he spoke at the Durham Miners ' Gala , praising working class culture . He also used the speech to attack spending cuts by the new coalition government , claiming they were not necessary .

In September 2010 , Livingstone criticised public spending cuts announced by the recently elected Conservative @-@ Liberal Democrat coalition government , which he stated amounted to £ 45 billion a year for London alone , and were " beyond Margaret Thatcher 's wildest dreams " as well as threatening to result in widespread division and poverty across the capital . In May 2011 , Livingstone said he was " appalled " that Osama bin Laden had been shot dead by US Special forces " in his pyjamas " and " in front of his kid , " and that the values of a western democracy would have been best demonstrated if Bin Laden had been put on trial and his words challenged .

Livingstone stood for the Labour candidacy as 2012 Mayoral candidate . His campaign attracted criticism when he joked that the election was " a simple choice between good and evil " , and when he was accused of anti @-@ semitism by Jewish Labour supporters for suggesting that being largely wealthy , the Jewish community would not vote for him . He denied making the comments , but nevertheless apologised .

Johnson 's campaign emphasised the accusation that Livingstone was guilty of tax evasion , for which Livingstone called Johnson a " bare @-@ faced liar " . The political scientist Andrew Crines believed that Livingstone 's campaign suffered from its focus on criticising Johnson rather than presenting an alternate and progressive vision of London 's future , also suggesting that after decades in the public eye , Livingstone had come to be seen as an over @-@ familiar and politically tired figure by the London electorate . On 4 May 2012 Livingstone was defeated in the London 2012 Mayoral Elections by the incumbent Mayor , Boris Johnson . There was only a difference of 62 @,@ 538 votes between the 2 candidates with Livingstone receiving 992 @,@ 273 votes and Johnson receiving 1 @,@ 054 @,@ 811 votes . Livingstone criticised bias in the media and declared that he would be bowing out of politics .

He remained publicly critical of Johnson over the coming years ; in April 2014 , he admitted that while he had once feared Johnson as " the most hardline right @-@ wing ideologue since Thatcher " , over the course of Johnson 's mayoralty , he had instead concluded that he was " a fairly lazy tosser who just wants to be there " but who does very little work .

== = Under Corbyn 's leadership : 2015 ? == =

In May 2015 , Livingstone endorsed Sadiq Khan to be the Labour candidate for the 2016 London mayoral election , and in July then endorsed Jeremy Corbyn in the 2015 Labour Party leadership election . After Corbyn was elected Labour leader , Livingstone was one of his most prominent allies ; in November 2015 Corbyn appointed Livingstone to co @-@ convene Labour 's defence review alongside Maria Eagle . This appointment was criticised by shadow defence minister Kevan Jones , who expressed the view that Livingstone knew little about defence and that it would damage the party 's reputation . Livingstone responded by claiming that Jones ? who has spoken about his own

clinical depression ? needed " psychiatric help " . Jones took offense , and while Livingstone initially refused to apologise , he subsequently did so at Corbyn 's urging .

Livingstone faced further criticism following a television appearance in which he stated that the perpetrators of the 2005 London bombings carried out their actions as retribution for UK involvement in the Iraq War . In March 2016 , Livingstone again courted controversy by comparing a hedge fund 's donation to Labour MP Dan Jarvis to " Jimmy Savile funding a children 's group " ; it subsequently emerged that Livingstone himself had received £ 8 @,@ 000 from a hedge fund , leading to accusations of hypocrisy .

= = = = Suspension from the Labour Party = = = =

In April 2016 , Livingstone commented publicly on the suspension of Labour MP Naz Shah ; she had been removed from the party after it was revealed that she had made comments on Facebook suggesting that Israeli Jews should be relocated to the United States . Livingstone stated that Shah 's postings , which were made before she became an MP at the 2015 general election , were " completely over the top " and " rude " , although he did not deem them antisemitic . He asserted that there is a " well @-@ orchestrated campaign by the Israel lobby to smear anybody who criticises Israeli policy as antisemitic " , and also stated that Adolf Hitler " was supporting Zionism before he went mad and ended up killing six million Jews " .

He defended his claims by reference to Lenni Brenner 's Zionism in the Age of the Dictators , and many commentators suggested that Livingstone was referring to the Haavara Agreement between Nazi Germany and the Zionist Federation of Germany . Livingstone 's statements were criticised by historians , among them Roger Moorhouse , who said that they were historically inaccurate . He also became involved in a public argument on the subject with the Labour MP John Mann .

Livingstone was subsequently suspended from Labour Party membership " for bringing the party into disrepute " . Over 20 Labour MPs called for Livingstone 's suspension , while Jon Lansman , founder of the pro @-@ Corbyn Momentum group , called for Livingstone to leave politics altogether , and Khan called for his expulsion from the party . In a subsequent interview , Livingstone expressed regret both for mentioning Hitler and for offending Jews but added that " I 'm not going to apologise for telling the truth . " Corbyn announced that the decision to expel Livingstone would be made by a National Executive Committee internal inquiry , whilst Livingstone insisted that he would be exonerated on the basis of Brenner 's book , saying " how can the truth be an offence ? " Following this controversy , Livingstone has questioned whether or not he has Jewish ancestry on his mother 's side stating that Greville Janner used to speculate whether or not he was Jewish because " my grandmother ? s name was Zona . "

Livingstone was sacked in Spring 2016 by LBC . He was quoted by The Daily Telegraph as saying this was because of his comments about Hitler . With the former Conservative minister David Mellor , Livingstone had co @-@ hosted a Saturday morning current affairs programme on LBC for 8 years .

= = Political views = =

Within the Labour Party , Livingstone was aligned with the hard left . Historian Alwyn W. Turner noted that Livingstone 's entire approach to politics revolved not simply around providing public services , but in trying to change society itself ; in his words , he wanted to get away from the concept of " old white men coming along to general management committees and talking about rubbish collection . " Biographer John Carvel , a journalist from The Guardian , remarked that Livingstone 's political motivation was a " fundamental desire ... for a more participative , cooperative society " , leading him to oppose " concentrations of power and ... exploitation in all its forms ? economic , racial and sexual . " However , Livingstone has also described his approach to fiscal policy as " monetarist " : " I was a monetarist right from the beginning when I was leader of the GLC . We paid down debt every year . We had an absolutely firm rule . "

Livingstone describes himself as a socialist . In 1987 , he stated that " politics is my religion . It 's

my moral framework . I believe a socialist society is inherently the best thing , and that 's like an act of faith . " In 2007 , he stated that " I still believe one day that the idea that the main means of production are owned by private individuals ... will be considered as anti @-@ democratic as the idea serfs could be tied to the land . But I will not be alive when that day comes . " Livingstone had always worked towards a unified socialist front on the British left , and disliked the tendency towards splintering and forming rival factions , usually over issues of political theory , among the socialist community . Although rejecting Marxism , throughout his political career he has worked alongside Marxist far @-@ left groups and has become involved with the " politics of the street " . He has not worked with those Marxist groups , such as the Socialist Workers Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party , who advocate the destruction of the Labour Party as the way forward for socialism , seeing their beliefs as incompatible with his own . Livingstone has consistently opposed the actions of the Israeli government . In a 2005 interview he said that he was not against the existence of Israel , but rather Ariel Sharon 's government ; he recalled that on his 1986 visit to the country he got on well with its left @-@ wing politicians .

Livingstone has consistently rejected being defined under any particular ideological current of socialism . Recognising this , in 2000 , the former Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock asserted that Livingstone could only be defined as a " Kennist " . Livingstone 's understanding of politics arises from his studies of animal behaviour and anthropology ; rejecting the idea that the human species is naturally progressing ( a view advocated by socialists like the Fabian Society ) , Livingstone instead took the view that human society is still coming to terms with the massive socio @-@ economic changes that it experienced upon the development of agriculture during the Neolithic . Highlighting that a hunter @-@ gatherer mode of subsistence is more natural to the human species , he believes that modern society has to adopt many hunter @-@ gatherer values ? namely mutual co @-@ operation and emphasis on human relationships rather than consumerism ? in order to survive .

= = Personal life = =

Historian Alwyn W. Turner noted that Livingstone was a " gifted communicator and self @-@ publicist " who was able to stump his opponents using his " mischievous sense of humour " . Biographer John Carvel echoed these comments , highlighting that Livingstone had a " talent for public speaking " . Biographer Andrew Hosken noted that many of those who had worked with Livingstone had commented on him being an excellent boss , who was " a good delegator , decisive and supportive " as well as being " a friendly and modest colleague . " Jenny McCartney , a reporter from The Spectator , expressed the view that " in person he is hard to dislike . There 's a notable absence of pomposity in his manner , a propensity to laughter , and his love of an ideological scrap is allied to a calm , sometimes wry style of delivery : it looks fiercer on paper . " In The Guardian , the journalist Hugh Muir described Livingstone as a man who is " happiest in the limelight , discomforted by the periphery " and who also " hates to apologise ... especially when called upon [ to do so ] ... by media or political opponents for whom he has no respect " .

On the issue of nationality , Livingstone has expressed the view that he identifies as English rather than British , although his father was Scottish and he supports the continued existence of the United Kingdom . Although raised into a nominally Christian family , Livingstone renounced religious belief when he was eleven , becoming an atheist . In a 2005 interview he commented that in doing so he had rejected " mumbo @-@ jumbo in favour of rational science . " He is known for his enthusiasm for gardening and keeping and breeding newts . He was the first person to breed the Western Dwarf Clawed Frog *Hymenochirus curtipes* in captivity . Livingstone is a big fan of The Godfather film franchise , stating that the actions of the criminal organisations within the movies are very much akin to the world of politics .

= = = Family = = =

Livingstone repeatedly attempted to keep his family life private , commenting that " I expect that my private life is not in the public domain and I 'm rude to any journalist who turns up ... at home " . It is

known that he has five children . Livingstone married Christine Pamela Chapman in 1973 ; the marriage ended in divorce in 1982 . Around that time he became involved with Kate Allen , now director of Amnesty International in the UK ; the couple separated in November 2001 . He then entered a relationship with his office manager , Emma Beal ; they have a son and a daughter together . Livingstone and Beal married on 26 September 2009 in the Mappin Pavilion of London Zoo . They live in North London .

Livingstone had also fathered three children prior to 2000 ; a boy by one mother and two girls by another . The children were born to two different women while Livingstone was involved with Kate Allen , according to an article by Decca Aitkenhead :

In his memoir , he describes how one was an old friend who was keen to have children but feared she was running out of time . " We had never been involved romantically but I knew her well enough to know she would be a wonderful mother and so I said I would like to be the father of her children . " A daughter was born in 1990 , and another in 1992 . Then another friend said she 'd like to have children : " And we agreed to have a baby . " Their son was born within weeks of his daughter in 1992 .

= = Legacy and influence = =

Throughout his career , Livingstone has polarised public opinion , and was widely recognised as a risk @-@ taker . Supporters described him as the " People 's Ken " and an " anti @-@ politician politician " , opining that he had the common touch with working @-@ class Londoners that most British politicians lacked . He was widely recognised for having improved the status of minority groups in London . He was also deemed a " formidable operator " at City Hall , with an " intimate knowledge " of London . He was also criticised during his career . During his Mayorship , he faced repeated accusations of cronyism for favouring his chosen aides over other staff . One of his supporters , Atma Singh , commented that under Livingstone 's leadership , a culture of bullying pervaded at City Hall , although this was denied by many other staff there .

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During the 1980s , Spitting Image featured a fictionalised version of Livingstone voiced by Harry Enfield . In 1990 , BBC show The Comic Strip produced an episode entitled " GLC : The Carnage Continues ... " in which Robbie Coltrane played a fictionalised portrayal of Charles Bronson playing Livingstone in a Hollywood movie . Kate Bush wrote the song " Ken " for the episode , which was then released as a B @-@ side to her single " Love and Anger " .