

**The front cover of this CST Antisemitic Discourse Report shows how national newspapers reported Ken Livingstone's role in the lengthy controversy surrounding antisemitism and the Labour Party.**

There has been no comparable situation in recent years, when antisemitic discourse has been an issue of such national attention and importance, in both Parliament and the media.

The newspaper front pages may be regarded as the peak of the antisemitism controversy. They followed a radio interview in which Livingstone (a veteran Labour politician, former leader of Greater London Council and twice elected as Mayor of London) claimed that in 47 years of Labour Party activism he had "never heard anyone say anything antisemitic." He further stated that Hitler "was supporting Zionism" prior to when he "went mad and ended up killing 6 million Jews."

Livingstone also claimed "there has been a very well-orchestrated campaign by the Israel lobby to smear anybody who criticises Israeli policy as antisemitic... frankly, there has been an attempt to smear Jeremy Corbyn, and his associates, as antisemitic from the moment he became leader."

Livingstone's interview provoked outrage from many politicians, media commentators and others. He was suspended from the party within hours.

Sadiq Khan MP (then standing as Labour candidate for Mayor of London) was unequivocal in his reaction to Livingstone:



Jon Lansman, founder of Momentum and long-time ally of Jeremy Corbyn MP stated:



Livingstone's statements typified the accusations of those who, despite all evidence to the contrary, continued to deny that there can be any such thing as antisemitism in left wing circles. His words not only denied that there was any problem whatsoever, but could easily be taken to mean that any Jews (or others) expressing concern about antisemitism were doing so as part of a faked pro-Israeli plan. Such language risks British Jews being regarded as willing agents and tools of Israel: rather than as being normal people who genuinely care about the problem of antisemitism.

Furthermore, Livingstone's intervention reintroduced the old Soviet anti-Zionist claim that the Nazis and the Zionists had somehow colluded together: essentially equating the two and removing any distinction between them. Most British Jews self-identify as Zionists. Livingstone's claim was historically misleading, but brought this ex-Soviet propaganda into the centre of contemporary antisemitic, anti-Zionist, and anti-Israel discourse within and around the Labour Party.