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## **Mayor Says London Shares Blame for Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**

**Associated Press**

**Aug. 23, 2007**

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<http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/europe/08/23/britain.slavery.ap/index.html>  
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**LONDON, England (AP) -- An emotional Mayor Ken Livingstone apologized Thursday for his city's role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, saying London was still tainted by it.**



**The notoriously outspoken Livingstone seldom apologizes for anything, but he choked up as he read an account of the brutal tortures suffered by slaves in Britain's Caribbean colonies.**

**And the politician nicknamed "Red Ken" for his left-leaning views angrily denounced the role of his city's corporations in financing the trade.**

**"You can look across there to see the institutions that still have the benefit of the wealth they created out of slavery," Livingstone said, pointing through a huge window at the skyscrapers of the financial district. "As mayor, I offer an apology on behalf of London and its institutions for their role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade."**

**The Rev. Jesse Jackson praised the statement, saying Livingstone broke important ground with his remarks. The civil rights leader said apologies should lead to reparations.**

**Livingstone did not explicitly mention restitution, but his tearful expression of remorse went further than a statement in March by then-Prime Minister Tony Blair on the 200th anniversary of the law that ended the slave trade. Blair expressed his deep sorrow, but did not make a direct apology.**

**Livingstone cultivates a maverick image, often clashing with the U.S. ambassador and even battling his own party.**

**His apology on the city's behalf, coupled with a demand that London's day of commemoration be instituted nationally, thrilled the crowd at city hall.**

**Livingstone said London would mark the horrors of slavery with an annual memorial day timed to coincide with the U.N.'s International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, held every August 23.**

**London played a central role in the slave trade, outfitting, financing and insuring many of the ships that ferried living cargo to plantations in the New World. Revenue from the trade helped fund the construction of London's docks.**

**London is not the first to apologize for the trade. The port city of Liverpool, one of the great European slave-trading ports, formally apologized in 1999.**