

SURPRISE OMISSION IN BLUEPRINT FROM THE HARD LEFT

Fresh land perspective is beyond our Ken

ANYONE who remembers the manner in which Ken Livingstone became leader of the Greater London Council, and the style with which he led that body, may well be surprised by this lucid, well-researched and extremely readable book.

Written from a left wing socialist standpoint, it shows how everything we read, including supposedly dispassionate history books, is slanted towards the view and opinion of the Establishment.

One looks at such topics as black sections in the Labour Part, Ireland, and women's position in society with totally new eyes after reading Livingstone. If some of his revelations are true then it is certainly NOT in the interests of the Establishment that they should be published.

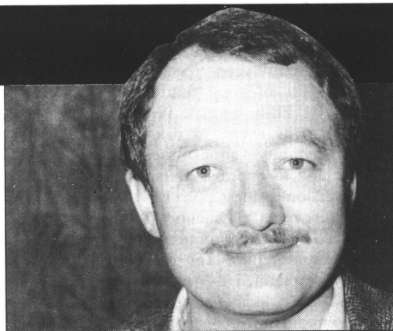
The book aims to give a blueprint for Labour Party policy over the rest of this century. But, beyond stressing on a number of occasions that the party will not win another election without a sound economic policy - showing not only where the money will be spent but also where that money will be coming from - all that Mr. Livingstone does is point out where Labour has gone wrong before and how it could do better next time.

The chapters about women and black people show that both these sections of the British public have increasing influence in the workplace and in society as a whole. They also point out that both have been largely ignored by the Labour Party leadership and the high-tech trade unions.

Livingstone draws heavily on Rosalind Miles' *The Women's History of the World* in tracing the gradual subjugation of women from pre-historic times, when they were at least the equal - if not the ascendant - partners. On black people's rights, Livingstone points out that most white people are indoctrinated with racist policies from the moment they are born, whether they realise it or not.

In his chapter on Ireland, Livingstone again goes back to early history, and details the various

REVIEW



Programme for
The Nineties,
Unwin Paper-
backs - £4.99

By JOSE MERNANE

attempts to control Ireland from the twelfth century on. In the sixteenth century, the English king abolished the Breton Law, whereby the land was collectively owned by all the Irish, and made all land the property of the Crown.

From then on, judicious grants of land succeeded where other attempts at mastery had failed. With so many people denied access to the land the Irish tragedy moved on inexorably to its resent state.

Sadly, having connected the land issue with the present troubles, Livingstone has no advice to offer on redressing the injustice. If he advocated land value taxation, he would come up with the sensible economic policy his party so desperately needs!

Several chapters on the United States show that all the aid and loans that have been given to war-torn countries and the Third World have been motivated by pure self-interest. Most Third World countries are now in debt to America and, with rising interest rates, have been forced to borrow more money to service their loans.

Livingstone quotes Susan

George's estimate that the death toll due to the consequent austerity measures is at least 15-20 million people every year - "the equivalent of a Hiroshima every two days".

Livingstone says: "The respectable grey-suited bankers who sit in the White House, the I.M.F., and the World Bank have become the most successful mass murderers in history ... it took Hitler four years to kill six million Jews: these grey-suited infanticides are responsible for a similar total every four or five months".

He also mentions Susan George's proposal that the Third World debt should be converted to schemes to preserve the environment is an idea now being seriously considered in Madagascar - thus each hectare of rain forest saved would wipe out part of the deficit.

As one might expect, Livingstone is scathing about the present Labour leadership.

The book is worth reading, if only for the fresh perspective it gives on topics where one might have thought that the last word had already been said.

It showed me how important it is to look at everything from several points of view and it made me long for a history of the world written from a Georgist standpoint.