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BOCOCK, Jean

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Abstract

Abstract Higher education policy has rarely been a major concern of the Labour Party in the second half of the twentieth century. This article explores the reasons for this and analyses the ideological coalition of the Labour Party in the context of the Welfare State and the commitments to moderate social democratic reformism. Three strands in particular are explored: the dominance of vocational, technological and professional priorities in HE expansion; the influence of utilitarian thinking, broadly construed; and the various social purpose, equality perspectives of those on the Left of the Party. Alongside these strands, has been Labour's reluctance to adopt interventionist policies especially in relation to the so-called elite Universities, and the persistent advocacy of ?modernisation?. Finally, the article considers, within a context of the debate in general political analysis, the potential of the Labour Party within this period to achieve significant reform in the field of higher education, drawing *inter alia* on the work of Ralph Miliband. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)