

# THE INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL FORMATION OF PROFESSOR HUGH CLEGG (1920-1949), A FOUNDING FATHER OF MODERN BRITISH INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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British Industrial Relations (IR) is one of the oldest and best-established business social science disciplines, with roots going back to the Webbs, and a strong interest in trade unions and their history. Long before Business Schools had appeared on the British academic landscape, strong IR groups had formed at Nuffield College, Oxford, London School of Economics and Warwick, Glasgow and Cardiff Universities. Prestigious masters and doctoral courses were established, and the discipline founded two leading journals, The British Journal of Industrial Relations and Industrial Relations Journal, as well as a subject body, the British Universities Industrial Relations Association (BUIRA). In post-war Britain, the pluralist school of Clegg, Flanders, Fox and others were a major influence on public policy, notably the 1968 Donovan Report. The late 1970s saw the discipline at the height of its powers, while the established pluralist school with its emphasis on collective-bargaining and form..

The author is writing an intellectual biography of perhaps the key figure in British Industrial Relations, Hugh Clegg (1920-1995), who played a central role in the formation of the 'Oxford School' at Nuffield in the 1950s, was instrumental in the foundation of the IRRU and Warwick Business school in the late 1960s, was prominent in IR public policy throughout the post-war period (to the early 1980s), and became the major historian of the British trade union movement. Arguably, Clegg was crucial to entrenching in IR, not only a strong empiricism, but also a deep historical sense of insitutional context. This paper will attempt to grasp what formed the ideas of this man and his generation of IR academics; and what drew them towards the labour movement and social democratic ideas. In Clegg's case, this includes his experience of the late 1930s and the War; the influence of his religious upbringing, as the son of a Methodist Minister; his early membership of Communist Party along with hi...

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