

From Dr. Fred Hunter, author of *Hacks and Dons: Teaching at the London University Journalism school 1919-1939: its Origin, Development and Influence* publication due November/December 2011, Kultura Press, England.

In 1945 a former Fleet Street editor, Tom Clarke, suggested the idea of a Journalism Society, 'such as the Law Society-providing its own programme of studies, its own professional code, and its avenues of recruitment: but that seems something far off.' This idea was picked up by the 1947 RCoP, which proposed a General Council of the Press concerned with maintaining the freedom of the press and the integrity on which its reputation depends (Cmd. 7700, para.618) as well as the problem of recruitment and training and maintaining high standards of professional conduct (paras. 619/20). Commission member Sir Robert Ensor also submitted a draft bill to regulate the invasion of privacy (TNA,HO 252/173, paper 189).

By the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> RCoP, in 1977, an earlier Lord Hunt, a former mountaineer from New Zealand, had to write yet another report on training journalists, expressing surprise that there was no journalistic equivalent of the Law Society. Clarke himself had been Britain's first journalism professor at London University from 1935-39 revitalizing the course at King's College with its own journalism room, Reuters news agency copy, and four Press lords donating £250 each for four years to pay his salary.

But for the outbreak of war, in 1939, this pioneering course would have become London University's first Journalism School with its own curriculum. How journalism education at university level evolved in Britain is the subject of *Hacks & Dons Teaching at the London University Journalism School 1919-1939*. This book started out as the first PhD at The City University journalism department, examined by Asa Briggs and Harold Evans, and is due out soon from Kultura Press. It details the evolution of the cultural education needed to provide neophytes with the background social and political knowledge as well as practical experience of reporting actual events in the capital.

The first examination subjects for journalism were agreed between the Institute of Journalism and the University of London in 1908 but not introduced until 1919, when the university jettisoned the 'technical', i.e. journalism, element. The IoJ was able to call upon American professors of journalism in 1908 and 1919 when they sought advice about setting up British university schools of journalism. That year American journalist Walter Lippmann conveniently wrote about the subject in the *Atlantic Monthly*, republished in his book *Liberty and the News*. He posed the rhetorical question about schools of journalism asking 'how far can we go in turning newspaper enterprise from a haphazard trade into a disciplined profession?' That he posed such a question in the very year that the London University introduced the Diploma for Journalism makes his answer appear even more remarkable today, when the American Journalism Schools are firmly established: 'Quite far, I imagine, for it is altogether unthinkable that a society like ours should remain forever dependent upon untrained accidental witnesses.'

While lip-service is paid to 'objective news facts' by British journalists they have rarely experienced real teaching of the 'Objective News Fact Concept' as propounded by such American journalist educators as Frank Luther Mott. So the notion of objective reporting took over American journalism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the News Study Group at MIT's political sciences department 'reporters were to become professionals and stay sober; they were not to pay for stories; they were not to impersonate law officials or anyone else in the pursuit of news; they were to forsake sensationalism and cheap thrills. Above all they were not to take sides or slant their stories.' By contrast Clarke's four-year Directorship of Practical Journalism is very low key: newspapers, and the BBC, regularly employed its graduates but he ploughed a lonely furrow, supported by his colleague Dr G.B. Harrison. Examination papers, illustrate how the course developed and show Ethics as a separate exam between 1927-30 and, from 1931-39, as the Ethics and Social Philosophy section of the general Philosophy paper. Clarke himself included ethical questions in his Practical Journalism papers.