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The Rand Daily Mail and the 1976 Soweto Riots. An examination of the tradition of Liberal journalism in South Africa as illustrated by The Rand Daily Mail coverage of the Soweto uprising on June 6 1976

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THE *RAND DAILY MAIL* AND THE 1976 SOWETO RIOTS. AN EXAMINATION OF THE TRADITION OF LIBERAL JOURNALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE *RAND DAILY MAIL* COVERAGE OF THE SOWETO UPRISING ON JUNE 16, 1976.

Submitted by Samantha Keogh

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies.

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the notion of liberal journalism in South Africa during apartheid as practiced at the *RDM*. It considered whether the paper, facing government scrutiny and restrictive laws, adhered to the principals of liberal journalism and how successfully it did so. The 1976 Soweto Uprising was used to assess the newspaper's performance and the merits of arguments for and against the notion of it being a successful example of a liberal newspaper. Content analysis and interviews with *RDM* staff members, was used to assess the paper's conduct. These primary sources were examined in conjunction with available literature and criticisms against the English press and *RDM* presented in testimonies at the TRCMH to assess the paper's reportage and how valid criticisms against it were. The researcher concluded that, due to serious shortcomings, which included its reporting of the uprising, the *RDM* was not a successful liberal newspaper.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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Samantha Keogh

This 31st day of January 2005

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

1.1 Liberalism 3

1.2 Liberal Journalism 4

1.3 Liberalism in South Africa and at the *RDM* 5

1.4 Literature 6

1.5 Methodology 8

1.5.1 The Truth and Reconciliation Media Hearings 8

1.5.2 Content analysis 10

1.5.3 Interviews 13

1.5.4 Reliability and validity of interview transcripts 16

1.6 Chapter breakdown 17

Chapter 2: Critiques of the *Rand Daily Mail* 19

2.1 Editorial department 21

2.1.1 Editors 21

2.1.2 Editorial policy 22

2.1.3 Views of Liberal Journalism 25

2.2 Advertising and readership 26

2.3 Owner and management control 30

2.4 Prisons stories and trial 30

2.5 Opposition press 33

Chapter 3: Critiques of the *RDM* 35

3.1 Legislation 36

3.2 Human rights violations 37

3.3 Working conditions 39

3.4 Detained 40

3.5 Training 41

3.6 *Township Extra* 42

3.7 Principals 42

Chapter 4: How valid were these critiques? 46

4.1 Effects of government legislation 46

4.2 *Township Extra* 51

4.3 Spies 56

4.4 Human rights violations 58

4.5 Working conditions and separate amenities 60
4.6 Training 61
4.7 Fired while in jail 64
4.8 Media's role in apartheid society 65
Chapter 5: The *RDM* in action 66
5.1 Research design 66
5.2 What could be expected from the *RDM* ? 70
5.3 The lead up to the Soweto Uprising 71
5.3.1 Warnings 73
5.3.2 Fair and adequate coverage 75
5.3.3 Language 78
5.3.4. Police Brutality 79
5.3.5 Treatment of headlines and photos 81
5.4 Coverage of the Soweto Uprising 83
5.4.1 Fair and accurate reporting 84
5.4.2 Language 86
5.4.3 Police brutality 87
5.4.4 Student violence 90
5.4.5 Treatment of headlines and photos 91
Chapter 6: Conclusion 96
6.1 Meeting the challenge 97
6.2 Falling short 101
6.3 A final analysis 104
References 107
Bibliography 112
Appendix A: Laws that bound newspapers 121
Appendix B: Interviews 133
B1. Gordon Amos 135
B2 Doc Bakitsha 146
B3 Patrick Laurence 158
B4 Raymond Louw 166
B5 Peter Magubane 204
B6 John Mojapela 214
B7 Benjamin Pogrund 223

B8 Gavin Stewart 245
B9 Gabu Tugwana 252
B10 Transcript comparison 266
Appendix C: Content analysis 267

ABBREVIATIONS

The following is a list of abbreviations used in this research:

- ANC – African National Congress.
- NP – National Party (also known as the Nats).
- NPU – Newspaper Press Union.
- PP – Progressive Party (also known as the Progs).
- RDM – Rand Daily Mail.
- SAAN – South African Associated Newspapers.
- SAHRC – South African Human Rights Commission.
- TRCMH – Truth and Reconciliation Commission Media Hearings.
- UP – United Party.