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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.

Johannesburg 2005

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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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.