

SALDRU CLIPPINGS COLLECTION
1975 - 2000

SALDRU's press clipping collection was invaluable in researching South Africa's transition to democracy...Reading through the incredibly "well-organised and complete collection, I was able to trace the daily activities of the anti-apartheid movement, the evolving response on the part of business, and the attempt of the state at various levels to control the movement. Preserving the collection will benefit scholars as well as journalists, students and citizens for decades to come"

Elisabeth Jean Wood

Professor of Political Science, Yale University

Research Professor, Santa Fe Institute and author of *Forging Democracy from Below* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

The clippings collection built up by the Southern Africa Labour & Development Research Unit (Saldru) in the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town covers what is probably the most crucial quarter century in South Africa's history. Started in the mid-1970s as a necessary tool to help social scientists and others to keep track of what was happening inside the country and in the wider region of Southern Africa, the collection grew daily as Saldru staff, student interns and visiting scholars helped to mark and clip a number (though not all) of the major English-language newspapers from around the country. Cuttings were then sorted into some 89 main subject headings (from Africa & Agriculture to the World Bank & Zimbabwe) and filed in A-4 boxes in the Saldru library where they were consulted on a regular basis by scholars from all over the world and by students writing special assignments in economics, politics, sociology and other disciplines. The growing collection proved invaluable to everybody for it enabled researchers to trace events which had not been recorded in any other way.

As the collection grew to over a million clippings---all pasted on sheets of scrap A-4 paper and filed, eventually, in no less than 2500 box files---it occupied an increasingly large amount of valuable library space and the clippings were threatened with incineration. Saldru thus made a bold (some might say foolish) decision to save the collection by harnessing the new

digital revolution and scanning every clipping even before it was possible to raise the necessary funds for this endeavour.

The results, we believe, more than justify that decision. The entire collection is now available on a mere 14 DVDs and can readily be accessed. Thus either at one's desk or (if the DVDs have all been loaded onto an internal server) or at a library consol one may click through the clippings (all of which are now numbered) in a particular file researching for the material that one needs.

Bill Nasson, Professor of History and Head of Department at the University of Cape Town who was himself once a young researcher at Saldru writes of his indebtedness to the newsclippings holdings, on a daily basis. He goes on to add that, "I was also able to observe the meticulous professionalism with which this news archive was constructed and supervised, turning it into a monumental print data resource on modern South and Southern Africa. It has provided an essential service to students and scholars, many of whom praise it not only for its comprehensive weightiness, but also its intrinsic fascination and comprehensiveness. For students of the more recent South African past the Saldru press extracts collection stands as an unrivalled research tool. This is an enormously impressive research record which cannot be recommended too highly."