

A guide on how to use archives and archival materials

Archival materials give you direct access to the time or event you are studying. The goal of this guide is to help you conduct research at the Swedish Labour Movements Archive and Library.



An archive is a collection of all the documents that are left after someone's activities, whether it is a person, a sorority, a political party, a union branch or an organization.

A short list of archival terminology is useful when searching in our collections:

Swedish

English

Arkiv	Archive - a collection of papers and documents. The term is also used for the room where the archival records are kept and for the institution that store and care for them.
Arkivkatalog	Archival catalogue (Web catalogue for all archival materials stored in our database)
Serie	Series
Volym	Volume
Dokument/Objekt	Item/ Document
Bestånd	Fonds or Collections
Samlingar	Collections
Arkivförteckning	Archival description (finding aid which tells the title of the collection, unique reference code, where it is being located, who created the collection, sort of material, scope and content, dates etc.)
Arkivbildare	Authorities - Creator of the archive

The documents are arranged, added in volumes and described in an *archival description*. If there are many volumes they are divided into different series, otherwise, they are described in a single list.

There are also a few *fonds* that have not originated from any certain activity, these are though held together in so-called collections [samlingar].

In all, we have more than a hundred thousand items in our *archival catalogue*. These items belong to more than 4,000 different archives and collections, or in rare cases only being a single document.

Archival descriptions are updated continuously, and changes may therefore occur.

The collections of the Labour movement's archives and library consists of documents, banners, stands, photographs audio and videos.

Search the archive catalogue

Each entry in the *archival catalogue* can contain information about the title, period, and sometimes even a detailed description of the content. Sometimes the item's location in a hierarchy is the only information available.


Individual archival documents are not classified in the same way as individual books. The best way to find information in the archive is often to find out who or which by their activities have had reason to document these. It often requires an understanding of how the creator of the archive function, and in what context they operated in. When for instance, a search of single words results in several interesting hits, it may be necessary to try to understand in which context the items belong, to understand the meaning of the hit list.

Search the archival material by using our archival catalogue (<http://www.borge.arbark.se>). Extended search and request facilities are only available at our premises, reasons why see below.

Authorities - Creator of archive

Authorities are the organizations and individuals that through their activities created archival documents. We have a special database for authorities. It contains the names (both formal and informal), biographical information and details of the type of business involved (person, a trade union association, political association, etc.), and at what level (local, regional, nationwide). The records in the database can be searched based on these concepts and linked to their respective holdings in the archive directory.


This is what a hit in *the authority database* may look like. Here Swedish Social Democratic Party, which actions resulted in the archive of the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

 **Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti; 1889-**

Aktuell arkivbildare

Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti; 1889-

Kod: SE/ARAB/auk/18

 Arkivbildare är kopplad till följande arkiv: [Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti](#)

Organisationstyp: 1. Riks

Huvudkategori: 6. Förening

Kategorier: 6100. Politiska föreningar

Ar: 1889-

Datum och platser: 1889 - partiets första konstituerande kongress
1897 - det första helt svenska partiprogrammet antas
1917 - vänsteroppositionen utesluts ur partiet och bildar Sveriges socialdemokratiska vänsterparti
1920 - den första socialdemokratiska regeringen, ledd av Hjalmar Branting

Parallella namn: SAP, Socialdemokraterna, Sossarna

Tidigare namn: Socialdemokratiska Arbetare-Partiet

Källa: http://www.ne.se/lang/sveriges-socialdemokratiska-arbetareparti?i_whole_article=true, 2009-11-30

Regler: International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families - ISAAR(CPF) 2nd edition - ICA 2004 ISBN 2-9521932-2-3

National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names, 1997

Publik: Ja

Referenslänk: <http://borge.arbark.se?SE/ARAB/auk/18>

Below is the archival description of the archive of the Social Democratic Party. Notice the hierarchical tree to the left.



How the materials are organized

Each archive is indicated by a unique reference code, followed by a letter for series, down to the number of the volume.

All requests are made on a volume level. Never on series or object level.

For example 1889/A/1/A/1

How to make requests?

- Always consult the web catalogue first and request by reference codes
- When at our premises – either directly through the catalogue or at our reference desk
- When from an external computer or from home - preferably through mail

Visit us

When using our *archival catalogue* the number of hits may vary as well as the design depending on whether you are here at our premises, or searching the database from home. The reason for this is partly due to copyright issues and personal data legislation.

Extended search and ordering facilities are only available at our premises. There you will also have access to additional search options (as the indexes for banners, photographs, audio and video), as well as the assistance of our staff at the research desk.

The physical archival documents never leave our premises. Therefore make a request, and take part in them in our reading room.

Citing archival materials

The importance of citing archival material correctly

Citing your sources is especially important when it comes to archival material.

1. Give your reader a chance to trace back your citation with minimal effort
2. Be able to trace back your research if needed
3. Get the best help possible from archival staff to as quickly as possible be able to re-read or trace your research

Whether you cite according to Harvard or Oxford style of referencing in your research - depends on the style guide required by your department or faculty.

In which way do you cite and make follow-up requests at Labour movements archives and library – you will need reference code or by reference to series, type of document and date (in a given archive).

Finding these items can be difficult with archival material as it tends to be unpublished records, or does not necessarily indicate an “author”. You may have to infer some information or describe an item or record based on higher levels of contextual data. Depending on how these sources are used in your paper, you may have to provide more descriptive detail and context.