

'The peacocks are screaming in Kaunda's garden'

Africa in the collections

During the winter of 1947-1948 the Swedish writer, Artur Lundkvist, made a long documentary tour of Africa, from Algeria down to South Africa and then back up through East Africa (Tanganyika and Zanzibar). His travel writings were published in 18 instalments in the magazine *Folket i Bild* [The People in Pictures] nos, 19-37, and are a fascinating snapshot of Africa immediately after the end of the Second World War. Colonial rule was still universal in the form of English and French garrisons and officials. The whole journey is described in colourful language that would certainly not be acceptable today: 'Into negro country', 'Negro pleasures in Zinder', etc. However, he is describing a continent in ferment, where a latent national self-consciousness foreshadows the liberation from colonial rule that would commence during the following decade.

All issues of the *Folket i Bild* magazine are, of course, in The Labour Movement Archives and Library. In addition there are some letters Lundkvist wrote to the editor-in-chief, Ivar Öhman, whose bequest of documents is kept at ARAB, in which he mainly complains about the heat but gives reassurances that everything else is going according to plan:

Durban is tropical. My clothes stick to my body, as I'm sure you'll be delighted to hear. How I would love a few weeks of fresh Scandinavian air. Otherwise your correspondent is still going strong.

The oldest material, from 1917

The majority of the material on Africa in the Labour Movement Archives and Library is mainly about the period following the liberation Artur Lundkvist saw would come. The 1970s and 80s are very strongly represented with the great involvement with South Africa and against the policy of apartheid that made itself felt at the time.

Conversely, before 1945 there is a dearth of African material and some is of an incidental or random nature. Take, for example, the papers of Karl and Elin Lund. Karl Lund (1874-1953) became, in the fullness of time, the editor of the periodical *Metallarbetaren* [The Metalworker],

but as a young man he spent some time during the 1890s in the Congo as some sort of fitter. The papers left by him and his wife consist partly of a diary of his stay and partly of photographs from the foundation of the Association of Congo Veterans in the 1930s. Apparently this is not, as the name might lead you to believe, an association of people working on behalf of the United Nations during the Congo crisis of the early 1960s. The diary describes the rough life and heavy drinking sessions of the young mechanics who reported for duty in Brussels and then travelled by boat down the African coast and up the River Congo.

Material retrieved from the documents in the papers of the chairman of the Social Democratic Party, Hjalmar Branting, on the so-called Stockholm Conference appear less random; an international socialist conference that was to take place in 1917. The conference itself did not come about but during the autumn of 1917 representatives congregated including many from 'the oppressed peoples of the east'. There were, for example, representatives from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Tripolitania wishing

*'to appeal to liberal-minded people throughout the world and urge them to hasten the end of the war. They ought also to take the necessary steps to safeguard against further hetacombs [sic] of dead bodies, the inequality of man, to restore the world's equilibrium – disturbed by the imperialists, whose blind tyrannical ambitions and lust for glory, power and wealth hold half mankind in chains. By the same token this equilibrium cannot be safe and enduring until all oppressed peoples are freed and their right to free determination of their own destiny is acknowledged by both belligerent blocs.'*¹

The failed conference was described as follows in a contemporary newspaper article:

These days ten Muslims are stalking the streets of Stockholm like wandering souls. They are representatives of oppressed Mohammedan peoples in India, the whole of North Africa and the Caucasus. Over wearisome paths they have

come here and met each other. They have left behind their warm countries and hot deserts, tempted by a rumour running the world of a light shining up here in the cold north, standing over our capital as over Bethlehem. What have they ultimately found in their burning desire for a new-born messiah? Here as everywhere they have been greeted only by commonplace politics and a mulish worshipping of the world and its materialistic values and not by the whole of the truth that would set them free. The great peace conference was only in their imagination. [...] Now the cold is creeping over the pilgrims.²

Branting's papers contain a good deal of these peoples' grievances, declarations and memoranda. Two examples are the Tunisians' and Algerians' complaints 'Une voix du Maroc' [A Voice from Morocco] and 'Översikt i sammandrag av verksamhet som utövas av de under oktober och November 1917 i Stockholm församlade ombuden för de förtryckta orientelska folkslagen' [A summarised overview of the activities carried out by the representatives of the oppressed oriental peoples assembled in Stockholm during October and November 1917].

Apart from this First World War document from Stockholm there is very, very little material relating to Africa from before the end of the Second World War. The material in Hjalmar Branting's papers are therefore extremely interesting, since it contains many early manifestos of the strivings of oppressed African peoples, among others, to be freed from colonial rule. It is also important because in purely geographical terms it contrasts with the material from the post-war period with its strong southern African emphasis.

The primary material from Africa during the inter-war period, Second World War and up to the time of freedom from colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s is to a large extent made up of newspaper pictures of the course of events. The institution has taken over many newspaper photo-archives containing, on the one hand many portraits of various African leaders and, on the other, extensive and often very good pictorial material from journalistic trips such as that of Artur Lundkvist. There are, however, no pictures from his travels – the pictorial material received from the *Folket i Bild* magazine is extremely scanty. Of course the press material also contains reports on political events. Take for example the extensive series of pictures from the Congo crisis at the start of the 1960s. The Swedish participation in the UN's peace-keeping force in the Congo was a political hot potato,

which is reflected in other places, for example in the papers of the then Prime Minister, Tage Erlander in the series Foreign Policy Issues and Speeches.


The great mass of material concerning Africa however, is to be found in the fonds of the solidarity organisations involved in that part of the world. They deal chiefly with specific organisations such as the Africa Groups, but also with the solidarity work carried on by trade union organisations (for example the LO-TCO Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Co-operation).

The Africa Groups

Local Africa Groups were already starting to develop in various parts of the country in the 1960s, beginning in Gothenburg, Lund, Stockholm and Uppsala. The newspaper, *Syd- & Sydvästafrika* [South & Southwest Africa] began publication in 1964 (later on *Södra Afrika* [Southern Africa], the *Afrika-bulletin* [African bulletin] and from 1995 *Södra Afrika* [Southern Africa] once again). Above all the desire was to disseminate information and alert public opinion to the terrible state of affairs in South and Southwest Africa. Riksorganisationen Afrikagrupperna i Sverige AGIS [National Organisation of Africa Groups in Sweden], was, however, only founded in 1975. A year later Afrikagruppernas Rekruteringsorganisation [Africa Groups' Recruitment Organisation] was formed on the initiative of the Africa Groups. Its first task was to recruit skilled 'solidarity workers in the independent countries, where the liberation struggle is bringing political victory and to carry out practical aid projects.'³

1992 saw these two organisations merge as the Africa Groups. The organisation's objective was, as earlier, to fight imperialism in all its forms and South Africa would remain the focal point.⁴

The Labour Movement Archives have also received only a trickle of material since the restructuring in 1992 of the Africa Groups. The archives of both the merged organisations are, however, at the institution. The least extensive is from the Recruitment Organisation of the Africa Groups. A series of 74 volumes contains chiefly extensive correspondence, primarily with solidarity workers but also authorities in various aid countries. A special project – 'Healthcare for SWAPO' – has left behind 16 volumes of documents concerning recruitment of aid workers, correspondence, dispatches from 1982-1989 etc. There is also material from seminars on solidarity work and of course minutes and accounts of the organisation's operations.



The pin reads "Liberty for Southern Africa". It was distributed by the Swedish Trade Union Confederation.

The Africa Groups have so far provided over 300 volumes of material of various types. The majority of this has still been only provisionally inventoried, but here too material from various projects and campaigns is predominant along with courses, seminars and meetings.

The Africa Groups in Sweden were involved together with eleven other individual organisations in a five-year project that the organisation Sida [Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency] initiated in 1986 to develop a long-term, joint focus on collaboration, training and information about Africa. The Project's secretariat was based at Sida and supported among other things the production of pamphlets and booklets – 'Afrika i skolböckerna [Africa in schoolbooks]' being one of them – and questionnaires the answers to which were collected and processed. In spite of the fact that Sida is a central civil service department answerable to the National Archives in terms of archiving, at the end of the project its material was transferred to the Labour Movement Archives and Library.

The Isolate South Africa Committee

Isolera Sydafrika-kommittén ISAK [Isolate South Africa Committee], was an umbrella organisation founded in 1979 on the initiative of the Africa Groups. Around 60 national organisations with altogether a million members were involved. The object of their activities was to work for the abolition of the apartheid system in South Africa, work in support of the ANC liberation movement and other democratic movements and for the isolation of the apartheid regime in South Africa. At first these activities were carried out in the local Africa Groups.⁵

By 1995 it was clear that the goal had been achieved. The Committee's activities were then wound down and its entire fonds of around 400 volumes was transferred to Nordiska Afrikainstitutet [The Nordic Africa Institute] in Uppsala, whence it has gradually found its way to the Labour Movement Archives and Library.⁶

This material too is not yet fully organised. An extensive collection of clippings testifies to the systematic monitoring of the contacts between Swedish companies and sportsmen and South Africa. The fonds is otherwise dominated by material from campaigns, meetings, people's parliaments, international exchanges and other similar activities.

Besides these large organisations there are documents concerning the aid and solidarity activities carried on by other organisations. One example of such an operation carried on on a small scale is a quite recent transfer, the records of Föreningen för folkhögskola i Namibia [Association for Extension Colleges in Namibia] in just one volume. Some Namibians who had spent time at

Swedish extension colleges decided in 1990, after Namibia became independent, to take the initiative in establishing similar education activities in their own country. The association was founded in 1990 and was active until 1997. Many of its members were based in various extension colleges in Sweden. The archive contains minutes, correspondence, clippings, etc. Common to all the above organisations is that the whole of their activities was focused on African issues. However, solidarity with Africa, as with involvement in other parts of the world, has been on the agenda of a large number of organisations but in these cases the African question is involved as a small part of a wider context.

Political and trade union aid work

One such example is Nordens fackliga samorganisation NFS [Council of Nordic Trade Unions], established in 1972 and consisting of the Trade Union Confederations in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden together with the confederations of professional employees in several of these countries. Its secretariat is in Stockholm. An example of how the organisation worked can be found in volume 56 of the archive in which South Africa is discussed at an NFS board meeting on 8 October 1976. A memorandum to the meeting states that the NFS presidency had appointed a working group with the task of 'mapping out what the member organisations were doing with regard to South Africa and against this background investigating the opportunities for co-ordinated measures by the NFS'. The working group included people from the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish Trade Union Confederations and proposed on the one hand calls on the Nordic foreign ministers and, on the other, a wide range of union activities along with financial assistance for those suffering the oppression of apartheid. In the organisation's fonds, running to many hundreds of volumes, the African question crops up here and there in various volumes. Here too the South African question is predominant, but other countries such as Angola and Tunisia feature as well. Africa is represented in at least 15 volumes.

LO-TCO Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Cooperation was another union organ with the task of co-coordinating and administering Swedish trade union development work in developing countries together with Central and Eastern Europe. Work here was also carried out mainly in the form of projects, from which documentation was progressively transferred to ARAB. Many of these projects concerned Africa but the organisation's fonds, which is very extensive, is still not open for research without special permission.

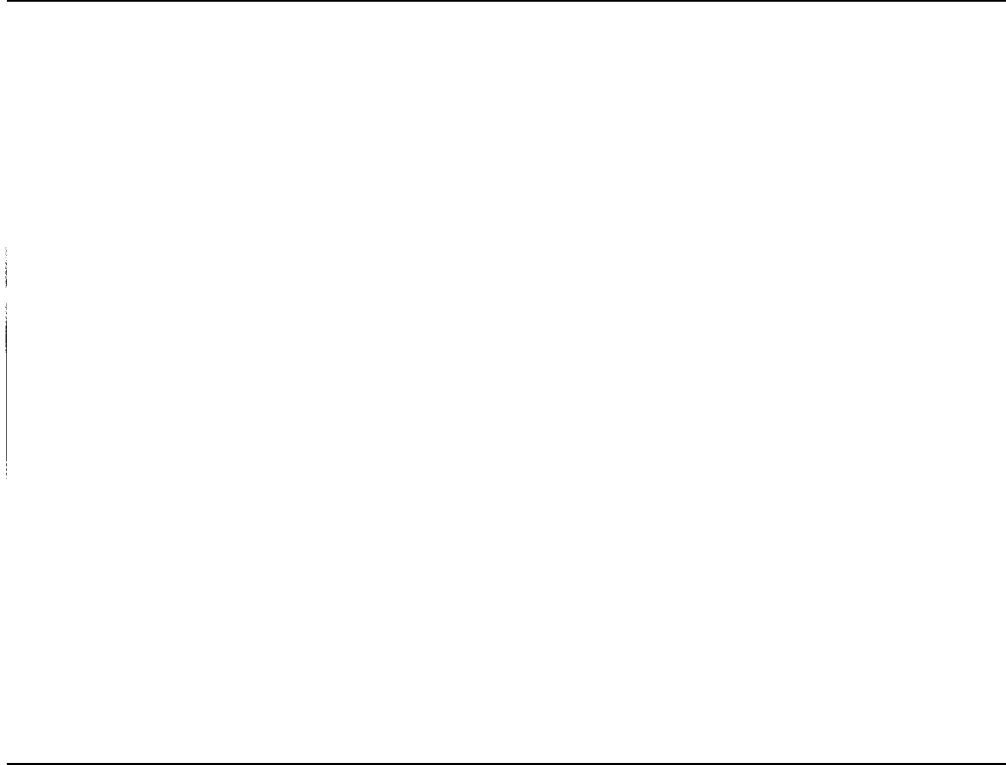
The fonds of Arbetarrörelsens internationella centrum

AIC [Labour Movement International Centre] occupies around twenty metres of shelving and some of it refers to Africa. This organisation, which is affiliated to the Social Democrats, was founded in 1978 and set out to strengthen the labour movement's interest and involvement in international issues. In 1992, the operation merged with Arbetarrörelsens Fredsforum [Labour Movement Peace Forum] giving rise to a new operation, Olof Palme's Internationella Centrum [International Centre]. AIC's fonds consists chiefly of correspondence, printed material –

land of racial hatred]' is to be found between one filmstrip on the abortion issue and another with the title 'Bosse luktar sprit [Bosse smells of liquor]'. In addition there are some films on Africa in the list.

Very often, the big central trade union and political organisations have had an international exchange of some sort. This is not always apparent from the catalogues but it is safe to say that Africa is represented in series of correspondence and the like. It is very clearly evident of both Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet SAP [Social

Democratic Party], and Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna VPK [Left Party – Communists] – now the Left Party. The SAP has, in the post-war period, had an international secretary whose correspondence forms a special series in the archives. There has also been an international section active within the party but Africa appeared to be very poorly represented in the material left by it. In the VPK's archives there are 50-odd volumes on international activities including correspondence but also minutes and documents arranged by subject. Here too Africa appears only exceptionally, for example in the form of documents from an African tour in 1961 and from anti-apartheid work from 1966 to 1983. The Christian social democrats – Broderskapsrörelsen [the Brotherhood Movement] – has also carried on international work but their descriptions are brief and



Prime Minister (1946-1969) Tage Erlander visited Tanzania and Kenya in 1968. There are a lot of newspaper clippings from these countries about the visit, in Erlanders papers. Photo: Morgon-Tidningen (MT).

including the AIC bulletin, the newspaper it published – along with a good many documents involving individual functions. However, the material is not arranged by subject.

International projects and seminars were also held by Socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbundet [Social Democratic Women's Association] which reaped dividends for the association's archives. In the late 1970s, for example, Kvinnor i Moçambique [Women in Mozambique] project took place. It is also worth mentioning an index of films and tapes that the association left behind. It is not arranged systematically which means that the tape 'Afrika, rashatets land [Africa,

provide only rough references to African material. The same is true in the main of all the youth associations in the Labour Movement. As with their parent parties, international solidarity work has been carried on sometimes to an even greater extent although partly in other forms. One example is Sveriges socialdemokratiska ungdomsförbundet SSU [Swedish Social Democratic Youth Association], in whose fonds a separate section – Handlingar rörande internationella frågor [Documents relating to international issues] – contains documentation from involvement in both Africa and other continents. Sveriges socialdemokratiska studentförbundet [Swedish Social Democratic

Student Union] took part in the Afro-Scandinavian conferences in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries. Africa also features in the Union's international correspondence.

An example of how Africa can feature in the smallest collection can be found in Svenska Kommunalarbetareförbundets avdelning 1 [Swedish Municipal Workers' Union section 1], where there is a batch of documents about international trade union co-operation. These deal with basic education for union representatives in Tanzania in cooperation with Juwata (The Union of Tanzanian Workers or in Swahili *Jumuiya Ya Watanyakazi Wa Tanzania*). A great deal of the material is in English but there are also texts in both Swedish and Swahili.

Africa in the archives of individuals

*The peacocks are screaming in Kaunda's garden. I remember that from my previous visit. Kenneth Kaunda was in Sweden as early as the 50s if I remember correctly. Then he was thought of as an opposition leader and semi-terrorist no less. He has now been the president of a free Zambia since 1964.*⁷

Of the institution's large collection of personal archives it is mainly material from the two successive Social Democratic prime ministers – Tage Erlander and Olof Palme – that is of particular interest. In both cases there is material from state visits made on the one hand to Sweden by African leaders and, on the other, to African countries by them. Erlander visited Morocco in 1965 and Tanzania and Kenya in 1968. The latter of these visits at any rate aroused a great deal of interest in the countries visited if one is to judge by the newspaper clippings concerned in the material. Olof Palme visited East Africa in 1971, a visit documented by the background reading material sent him by the Foreign Ministry together with newspaper clippings and the like. The greatest immediacy is given by some undated scraps of jottings with notes (Palme's own?) that appear to originate from conversations with Tanzania's President Nyerere. Six years later in 1977, Palme made another trip through Angola, Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. On this occasion he was not travelling as the Swedish Prime Minister but as the leader of a delegation from the Socialist International – he had been one of the vice-chairmen of the International since 1976. Palme described the twelve-day journey himself in a travel diary published in the Swedish evening paper *Aftonbladet* and in France in *Jeune Afrique*.

However, indisputably the richest material is to be found among Olof Palme's many speeches and addresses. These are also very easy to find thanks to the auxiliary register that has been prepared for the archival descriptions and which is computerised. The keyword 'Afrika' guides you to almost a hundred articles, contributions to debates, speeches and addresses from the period 1950-

Medal awarded to Olof Palme by the United Nations on 11 October 1978, for his meritorious struggle against the Apartheid system.

1986. The material appears to almost sum up Palme's political activities. His first article from 1950 in the newspaper *Studenten* relates to Africa and one of his last addresses was against apartheid, made to the Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid in Folkets hus [People's House] Stockholm on 21 February 1986 – just a week before he was murdered.⁸

There are other individuals whose archives have African connections, for example SAP's international secretary (also Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under Foreign Ministers Lennart Bodström and Sten Andersson), Pierre Schori's, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's and many others although Africa in particular is scantily represented here. Alva Myrdal made a trip to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1961, from which at least the itinerary was preserved. Material has also been saved from her time as chairman of the UN's Commission for Investigation of Measures Against South Africa in 1964. However, the Myrdals' international interest lay rather in Asia and America, Pierre Schori's international involvement tended to be in Latin America (his papers are, moreover, not accessible to researchers without permission).

Nevertheless Africa is well represented in one of the personal archives transferred to ARAB in 2001. From 1963-

1986, Thorsten Nilsson was active in various ways in the Swedish aid organisation Sida and investigated amongst other things the need for adult education in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania after which he was engaged to take part in their practical implementation. Nilsson's papers contain a great deal of material on these activities. Documents relating to Nilsson's UN assignment as observer of the first free elections in Namibia in 1989 are also of great interest. They include a typewritten diary in which he describes his experience of these events. The material also includes a large quantity of photographs and negatives of African subjects.

Special types of documents

Speaking of Africa we must make particular mention of some of the institution's special holdings, namely the large collection of pictures and posters. We have already spoken of the picture collection in connection with the

reporting and documentation of African leaders and monitoring of the Congo crisis for instance.

Posters, like photographs, can be searched for in a special register. A large number were produced by the organisations mentioned above and a large number of others as a part of their work of raising public awareness. (Stockholms arbetarekommun [Stockholm Branch of the Social Democratic Party], Sweden's Social Democratic Youth Association, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, Folkets park [People's Park], Arbetarnas bildningsförbund [Workers Education Association], etc). Posters belonging to these fonds are at ARAB but are kept separately because of their special format. There are posters that encourage attendance at various open air meetings, ask for contributions to funds, give information on the current situation in Eritrea or express a point of view ('Sovjet förfalskar Eritreas historia! [Soviet falsifies Eritrean history!]) or simply make invitations to a cultural event in the manner of an Eritrean evening or the like.

NOTES

1. Summarised overview of the activities carried out by the assembled representatives of the oppressed peoples of the east during October and November 1917 in Stockholm. Hjalmar Branting's papers, vol. 4.1:2, ARAB. For the Stockholm Conference see Martin Grass: The Peace Issue in Stockholm 1917 - a Threat to the Belligerent Powers, in *Arbetarhistoria* no. 47, 1988, p 9ff.
2. *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* [People's Political Daily], quoted in Martin Grass: 'Ten Muslims account for their nations' slavery'. Representatives of Islamic Peoples in Stockholm 1917, in *Arbetarhistoria* no. 97, 2001, p 44.
3. *The Syd- och Sydvästafrika, Södra Afrika* newspapers, various numbers and the *Afrikabulletinen* 3/1991, p 2.
4. *Folkrörelse- and föreningsguiden*. Stockholm 1993, p 261.
5. *Ibid.* p 265.
6. 'ISAK plockar ned skylten' [ISAK takes down the signs], *Södra Afrika* 5/1995, p 23.
7. Olof Palme's African diary, published in *Aftonbladet* 9 October 1977, Magazine pp 1, 4-7.
8. Systematisation of the register is, however, not completely

reliable. Ingrid Malm-Andersson's *Olof Palme. En bibliografi* [Olof Palme, A Bibliography]. Hedemora/Uppsala 2002, is on the other hand amply provided with systematic subject registers and search paths to Palme's printed works.

9. Thorsten Nilsson's papers, ARAB, vol. 4:08, UNTAG = the United Nations Transition Assistance Group.

SUMMARY OF ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

Afrikagrupperna - 317 volumes

Afrikagruppernas rekryteringsorganisation - 79 volumes

Alva and Gunnar Myrdal - a few volumes, separate series 4.1.12 South Africa

Arbetarrörelsens Internationella Centrum (AIC) - a few volumes in Series F2 Handlingar rörande seminarier [Documents relating to seminars]

Hjalmar Branting - a few volumes in Series 4.1. Socialistiska internationalen and internationella socialistiska kontakter [The Socialist International and international contacts]

However, there are also particular posters from international organisations such as the Organización de solidaridad por Africa, Asia, y América latina OSPAAAL [Organisation for Solidarity with Africa, Asia and Latin America]. Their proclamation of a World Solidarity with Mozambique Day on 25 September 1968 is incorporated in the collections at the Labour Movement Archives and Library. To anyone wanting a quick overview of the whole broad field of Swedish opinion forming on Africa, these posters are a goldmine. Since the poster collection is for the most part registered by object it also gives a picture of the breadth of Swedish organisations' involvement in Africa that one would otherwise have to search quite systematically through an enormous stock to find.

There are no 'African' archives at the Labour Movement Archives and Library of the same type as the German exile archives, for instance, or those from the Scandinavo-American organisations. The material that has been described here, however, does give an overview of the involvement with Africa that existed and the interna-

tional co-operation concentrated on Africa that was carried on by various Swedish labour movement organisations. It also shows how Swedish public interest in the continent appeared generally speaking throughout the whole of the last century. This interest to a large extent involved the fight to decolonise and democratise the countries of Africa. As an example of how Swedes engaged and were engaged in this process we may quote from Thorsten Nilsson' last diary entry as UN observer in Namibia:

The election is over, the result is clear. We are humbly grateful and above all happy that it has gone so well. Countless things could have gone wrong. Even the weather was on Namibia's and UNTAG's sides. Now we intend to see some of Namibia before the journey home. ... It has been a great privilege to be present at the birth of the Namibian state.⁹

Tage Erlander – a few volumes in Series 4.2. Handlingar rörande särskilda frågor [Documents relating to specific issues], 4.4.1. Statsministerns besök i utlandet [The Prime Minister's visits abroad] and 4.2.1. Utländska statsbesök i Sverige [Foreign state visits to Sweden]
 Framtid för Afrika [A Future for Africa] – 31 volumes
 Föreningen folkhögskola i Namibia – 1 volume
 Isolera Sydafrika-kommittén (ISAK) – approx. 400 volumes
 LO-TCO:s biståndsnämnd – separate series F1-F3b
 Biståndsprojekt [The Aid Project]
 Olof Palme – frequent in Series 2.2 Books, pamphlets etc., 2.3. Articles, etc., 2.4.0. Speeches, public, and 2.6. Interviews
 Pierre Schori – isolated volumes
 Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (SAP) – separate series E2B Partisekreterarens utländska korrespondens [The Party Secretary's Foreign Correspondence] and E5 Internationale sekreterarens korrespondens [The International Secretary's Correspondence]
 Sveriges socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbund (SSKF) – isolated volumes in Series F4 Handlingar angående internationella kon-

ferenser, seminarier och särskilda projekt [Documents relating to international conferences, seminars and special projects] and in Series K1a Filmer and ljudband [Films and Tapes]
 Sveriges socialdemokratiska ungdomsförbund (SSU) – separate series F05 A-B Internationella frågor [International Issues]
 Vänsterpartiet kommunisterna (VPK) – separate series 7a-d
 Handlingar rörande internationella frågor [Documents relating to international issues]

Picture archives in which Africa is relatively well represented

Byggnadsarbetaren
 Gruvarbetaren
 Karl and Elin Lund (Föreningen Svenska Kongoveteranerna)
 Metallarbetaren
 Morgon-Tidningen
 Ny Dag
 Statsanställd

Poster collection – Approx. 200 posters

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