

## MIRIAM ALMAN (12 AUGUST 1913 – 27 DECEMBER 2007)

Miriam Alman was one of the earliest and most active of SCOLMA's bibliographical stalwarts and was responsible for or associated with the majority of SCOLMA's earliest publications.

In 1963, a year after SCOLMA's foundation, the Committee successfully obtained a grant of £2,500 from the Leverhulme Foundation which allowed them to engage Miriam as part-time Bibliographer to work principally on compiling a list of periodicals published in Africa. The results of her work were initially published as "Periodicals published in Africa" in 10 supplements to *Library materials on Africa* SCOLMA's journal of the time, between 1965 and 1970 and were of course later revised and issued as probably SCOLMA's major single publication as *Periodicals from Africa: a bibliography and union list of periodicals published in Africa*, comp. Carole Travis & Miriam Alman, ed. Carole Travis. Boston, G.K. Hall, 1977 with some 17,000 entries and locations in 60 U.K. libraries. (A supplement compiled and ed. David Blake & Carole Travis was published in 1984).

A further grant in 1969 of £1,200, this time from OSTI (Office of Scientific & Technical Information) not only helped to fund the completion of her work on periodicals but enabled her to take over the compilation of SCOLMA's "annual" series *U.K. publications and theses on Africa* which had been begun in 1966 with volumes covering the publications of 1963 and 1964. Miriam was responsible for editing the last two volumes issued in the series, those for 1966 (published 1969) and for 1967/1968 (published 1973). She compiled a further volume for 1969/70 but by now there are no financial resources available to continue publication and her typescript was deposited in the library of SOAS. In 1972 Miriam was also responsible for SCOLMA's pioneering *Debates of African legislatures* which included the holdings of 54 libraries (21 in the U.K., 23 in Africa, 6 in the U.S.A., 1 each in Australia, West Germany, India and Sweden)

Although SCOLMA members will probably be most aware of her work in the Africanist field, she will be remembered by the wider information community for her work on a number of other bibliographical projects. Having re-organized the Information Department at J. Walter Thompson, 1949-50, and worked as a cataloguer at Chatham House Library, 1950-51, she spent the rest of her professional life as a free-lance bibliographer. She was the editor of the very first post-war edition of the *Aslib directory: a guide to sources of information in Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1957), now of course in its 14th ed. (2006) and the joint compiler of "Crick and Alman", *A guide to manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland*, comp. Bernard Crick and Miriam Alman (London 1961) one of the earliest of the guides to manuscript and archival resources relating to specific regions of the world which began to appear in the

1960s. Following this she worked during 1961 to 1964 with Ian Christie on the *Bibliography of British History, 1789-1851*, eventually published by Clarendon Press in 1979. Then came the decade or so working with SCOLMA, followed by a dozen years as Information Officer/Librarian to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Miriam remained a faithful friend of SCOLMA for many years after her bibliographical work, and was a regular attendee at AGMs and at SCOLMA seminars up to the late 1990s. In her later years she was very much involved with the Sybil Campbell Library, founded by the British Federation of University Women, now the British Federation of Women Graduates, of which she was Librarian and later one of the Trustees, helping to supervise its move from Crosby Hall to Great James Street, London and using her wide range of contacts in the library world to get help and advice for re-establishing, cataloguing and conserving the collection. (The Sybil Campbell Library is now, since March 2007, in the care of the University of Winchester.

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