



The Sparrows' Nest

Acceptance policy for new materials/collections

Run by a collective of volunteers, the Sparrows' Nest was established in late 2008 as a 'Centre for Anarchist Culture and Education' in Nottingham. Its primary function is to provide private and academic researchers and other interested persons with a library and archive for two strands of collections:

- international, national, regional and local anarchist history and studies;
- regional and local working class political struggles.

Like every other library and archive, the Sparrows' Nest has only limited resources and finite physical space to store materials and make them available to researchers.

The following guidelines aim to clarify what kind of documents and other archival materials we can accept and to provide some information on what happens if someone offers us a collection of materials. However, most of these guidelines are flexible,* therefore:

If you have any documents and/or other archival materials, please don't bin them, get in touch with us!

What we accept ...

We **specialise in collecting and preserving documents** (books, pamphlets, papers, leaflets, posters, etc.) and we house a few items such as badges, banners and posters.

We hold an ever growing collection of **books** and are happy to accept more. Our main sections are:

- Non-fiction by/about/influenced by and influencing Anarchists and Anarchism;
- Anarchist art, fiction, poetry, music etc;
- Local studies;
- Social and economic history;
- General left (including e.g. Marxism other non-anarchist philosophy and/or socioeconomic theory).

We also house a vast amount of **pamphlets and papers** (this includes regular and irregular publications). As outlined above, we accept international, national, regional and local anarchist materials as well as non-anarchist materials relating to local working class political struggles.

We accept **other documents** which fall into similar categories. That includes not only materials which were intended for publication (e.g. posters and leaflets), but also internal materials such as correspondence by persons and organisations, conference documents, minutes, financial records etc.

We **usually do not accept environmental and animal rights** related materials unless they originated with local anarchist/libertarian groups.

* With the exception of the privacy-related guidelines in the '... and what we do with it section'.



... and what we will (not) do with it

Please **contact us** if you have any materials you think may be relevant.

If possible **please give us an idea what materials are in your collection** (books, pamphlets, random bits of paper, etc.), their general condition (e.g. were they stored in a pigeon poo smeared attic?) who published them for what purpose (e.g. whether it is a collection of leaflets from a specific group) and whether they were created in relation to specific issues/struggles (e.g. 'a folder with antifascist leaflets from the early 90s', etc.).

We sometimes accept materials on the basis of a long term loan and process them accordingly.

Please **make sure before offering a collection that everyone concerned is OK with this** (e.g. discuss in your group whether everyone agrees that internal materials are given to us). Please confirm with us that you have done so. In most cases we will be unable to check ourselves, and would like to avoid receiving a pissed off email demanding stuff back after we processed it.

Although most new materials are integrated in the existing collections, we understand that some people would like it if **their collection is kept together**. In principle this is possible.

Usually materials will be stored on site but some materials may be stored off site and would need to be requested by users. If in doubt, please get in touch before visiting us.

We will examine and sort a collection that we have accepted and process it **as soon as we can** (due to our general workload this may take a while!). By processing we mean e.g. the following:

- Books or pamphlets will be:
 - checked for damp, mould and/or other icky stuff;
 - checked for loose or missing pages;
 - catalogued;
 - and put with their new friends in the appropriate place (shelf, archival box, etc.).
- A bag/box/folder of assorted papers (say a collection of internal documents and leaflets) will be:
 - checked for damp, mould and/or other icky stuff;
 - if necessary dried, smoothed and bits of metal (pins, paper clips, etc.) removed (as these are in the long run nasty killers of precious paper!)
 - sorted, catalogued and (if possible/deemed necessary) digitalised (e.g. if the materials are in very bad condition so that they would be better off not being touched);
 - put in a safe enclosure (usually an archival – i.e. acid free - box) and stored in the appropriate place;
 - and (possibly) uploaded as part of our online databases.

We know giving materials to us requires a lot of trust being put in us and we take this responsibility very seriously indeed. As a rule of thumb we will never put anything online (if it was not originally intended for publication) unless it is older than 40 years (and even then we will not automatically do so but decide this on a case by case basis).

We are a collective of people dedicated to this project and are very aware of its importance for the present and future movement(s). We will do **everything we can to preserve accepted materials and make them accessible to users**. We will **do our utmost to protect this project and keep it going indefinitely**.

Should this project fail for whatever reason we would do whatever we could to make sure the materials are not lost to future generations. Any loaned collections would be given back to their owners whilst we would endeavour find a suitable home for the other materials. **We can guarantee you that we would never dump or sell any rare or even unique materials.**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.