

—Hereford Solidarity League was formed in 2007 with the vision of highlighting and dealing with problems faced by the working class people in the county. In this document we hope to expand on our basic principles, and to offer positive solutions to some of the issues dealt with. Unlike political parties we are not asking for your vote, but have decided that the run-up to the general election is a good time to offer our alternative.

The long-term aim of the Hereford Solidarity League is to build a society based on the principles of freedom, equality and community. By this we mean a society where every individual is free to do as they please as long as that doesn't infringe on the freedoms of others. By equality we mean a classless society, where everybody is treated as equals regardless of colour, race, gender or sexuality, and where nobody is in a position of authority over anybody else. We believe that this can be brought about by building solidarity amongst working class people, and through taking collective action in our communities to deal with the everyday problems that we face.

Health

All healthcare should be freely available for everyone. We believe that this is a solid principle, and one that the NHS was founded on. But due to privatisation and the ever-inflating capitalist values of business, this principle is threatened. Problems such as a lack of beds or hospitals refusing to invest in medication deemed 'too expensive' can be linked to this.

Hospitals and surgeries should be controlled by healthcare workers and patients' groups, not politicians or businessmen. We must reopen our old village and community hospitals. Our existing hospitals should be equipped with all the very latest medicines and technologies required to do the job. In the 21st century, where we are surrounded by vast wealth, no one should be suffering because the necessary medication is too expensive; no one should die because the nearest suitably equipped hospital is over 70 miles away.

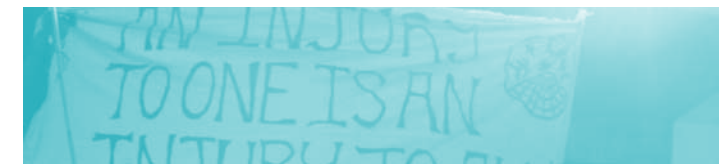
Prescriptions should be free for all. Hospital parking charges must be scrapped. The health service should be run for the benefit of the people not as a money-making business.

Work

Many businesses in today's society serve no social purpose—call centres, for example—whilst many other necessary services are under-staffed, like hospitals. We want to see a future where work is focused on the actual needs of society not on what can make a bigger profit.

We believe that it is communities that should decide what is produced with the resources we own; production should not be based on the whims of individual 'entrepreneurs'. This work must then be managed by all staff involved in it, not company directors.

In the here and now we support workers fighting back to improve their conditions and attempts to make their workplaces more democratic.



Housing

Housing is a necessity and is one of the most fundamental human needs. The current housing system works on the basis of profit and greed. Landlords, property developers and local authorities hold back empty houses, drive up rents and house prices and force vulnerable people to live in sub-standard housing. Why is it some working class families have to suffer shabby, overcrowded accommodation while other smaller families can live in large houses with unused rooms just because they are rich? We believe all housing should be allocated according to need not wealth.

In Herefordshire we have over 5,000 people waiting for social housing whilst nearly 2,500 properties lie empty across the county. The situation is similar across the rest of the country.

We support squatting as an option for immediate self-housing. We oppose the Edgar Street Grid development; we want to see its funds redirected towards the priority building of affordable housing to buy and rent in the county.



Voting

Whether you do it or not, voting in elections will never bring about effective change; ticking a box once every four years does not constitute a real democratic system.

We support collective, direct action as a way of making real, positive change. Strong communities working together have a bigger voice than an individual shouting alone, and by direct participation in decision-making, the need for 'representatives' or politicians is removed altogether.

Organising ourselves without leadership is a core principle of Hereford Solidarity League. Why vote for people to represent you when you can cut out the middleman and speak for yourself?

Education

Currently the education system in Britain is organised to teach our children to be good little workers. But we are faced with a dilemma: do we give our children the freedom to become intelligent and well-rounded individuals or do we teach them the skills they need to survive in the world of work? Until capitalism is abolished, reform of the system can only be limited.

What we are certain of is that a 'one-size' education system doesn't fit all. This rigid system contributes towards the lack of interest some pupils feel towards learning. Not everyone will be good at maths, not everyone responds well to the extreme structure of school; this doesn't make them thick.

Schools should be free of religion. They should be structured in a more informal way with an emphasis on learning not discipline. University education should be free for all.



Crime & Prevention

Capitalism by its very nature breeds crime. The greed that exists in society will always result in people committing crime for personal gain. Until we replace the competitive system of capitalism with cooperation, crime will exist.

We believe that to truly eliminate crime we have to get rid of the social conditions that create it, not just punish criminals once they have broken the law. Our reliance on the police to sort things out for us often does more harm than good. Strong, close-knit communities are less likely to suffer from anti-social crime, and are more able to take care of themselves, removing the need for a police force altogether.

In Hereford, as in many places, a high percentage of crime is a result of drug abuse. We believe all drugs should be legalised to allow those with addictions to be treated as people with serious illnesses not as criminals.

Environment

The human race is facing an uncertain future due to destruction of the planet. This is a direct result of a global capitalist system that will go to any length to create 'economic growth'. While we clearly need to deal with environmental issues, for many people this is not a priority. We cannot expect people with housing or other social issues to worry about climate change.

By working towards a future without capitalism we can deal with both people's day-to-day problems and environmental destruction that threatens us all.



Immigration

We believe people should have the freedom to live wherever they choose. But some people have no such freedoms and are forced to leave friends and family to escape intolerable conditions. Where necessary, we must support such people if they choose to make this country their home.

However, Britain—like any other small country—can only sustain so many people. At certain times, immigration may need to be discouraged but instead of closing our borders we should be dealing with the reasons why people leave their home countries in the first place. Immigrants leave to find new jobs because of poverty; they flee wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan in search of safety; they seek refuge from persecution and dictatorships to live a freer life.

We must protest against the part our own government plays in creating these problems abroad. We must end all wars and we must support foreign revolutionary movements that are fighting for improvements in their standards of living and therefore reducing the need for emigration.

War

We are opposed to all wars. It is working class men and women who are sent away to fight against other working class men and women, just like themselves. Many pay with their lives.

Wars between nations will never benefit our class. The only winners are the ruling elite: the governments who have gained control over new lands and new resources; the multinational companies that make millions upon millions through selling weapons to foreign governments.

We support the withdrawal of the all armed forces around the world from all current conflicts.



FREEDOM, EQUALITY & COMMUNITY

The manifesto of Hereford Solidarity League



Class

We believe that there is still a class divide in the world today. Class is defined by the amount of power and money you have and the job you do. We believe that society is roughly divided into two classes: the working class and the ruling class. There is also a 'grey area', the middle class, which tends to have more in common with one of the two other classes.

We view the ruling class as social parasites: those that take a lot but give very little. A great contrast to the working class that takes very little but produces a lot.

Society is organised for the benefit of the rich and powerful, but it is our class that is the most numerous and without our consent they achieve nothing. We believe that if working class people realise the strength we have when we act together then we can rid ourselves of these parasites and run the world for our benefit and not theirs.

We've had enough of the ruling class controlling our lives, and exploiting us for their own financial gain. We believe in freedom and equality, and this can only be achieved by removing the power of the ruling class.

Our ultimate goal, through revolution, is to abolish the class system altogether and create a society of true equality.

So what can YOU do?

The overriding principle behind that we stand for is direct action. Direct action means taking responsibility for the problems that you face and sorting things out for yourself—often getting together with other people—rather than relying others to do it for you.

We believe that the policies we have outlined and the anarchist society we have tried to describe cannot be created by a small number of people, but that it must be formed by the involvement of everyone... that means you. If you agree with what we have said then we encourage you to take action yourself. Start a campaign for or against a particular issue, or get involved in one that already exists. Get together with work mates or join your union to improve conditions at work. If there are problems in your neighbourhood, join your community association or start an action group.

Organising strong community ties is just the starting point in achieving a society where all are free and equal, one where all resources are held in common, owned by no one and managed by everyone. We work towards a world of peace where every man and woman gives only what they are able to and receives all that they need, and one where no one has any greater or lesser power than the next person. This world must be created by us all.