We live in an increasingly dangerous world. Capitalism is in its deepest crisis for 80 years. The falling rate of profit has led to a worldwide stagnation in investment. Its effects are visible everywhere. At the same time the ecological destruction of the planet increasingly threatens the future of life on earth itself.

Around the world, governments relentlessly attack working-class living standards in a futile attempt to reduce the debt burden called forth by financial speculation. Simultaneously, the economic crisis has led to acts of aggression and military threats in many regions of the globe. Whether in the South China Sea, the Middle East or Ukraine — everywhere the imperialist powers are flexing their muscles in anticipation of an open conflict.

**War and Growing Barbarism**

It appears that we are in an embryonic phase of a global war where the front line of the imperialist conflicts runs through every location, as the bombings of the last few months in Brussels, Baghdad, Beirut, Istanbul and Ankara have shown. The terrorism of Islamic fundamentalism is an expression of the conflict between imperialist powers, and/or those who want to become such.

However, the aim and content of the aim are the same. The façade of Islamic terrorism hides its aims behind affirmations of democracy, while the other relies on an especially reactionary and obscurantist version of religion. But these are merely two sides of the same coin. Both are based on the exploitation and holding down of the working class. In the particular shape of Islamic fundamentalism this is achieved by resorting to medieval forms of repression.

Yet, even though Islamic fundamentalism is a new phenomenon, it finds sympathy among proletariats and radicals, and the bourgeoisie’s massive propaganda campaigns have led to all kinds of mystifications and confusions. Social dissatisfaction and frustration are deep-seated, but for many people an alternative is simply unimaginable, let alone tangible. The “Arab Spring”, which initially stirred great hopes, led to no positive change. In this climate of socially empty existence, powerful-funded fundamentalist propaganda found fertile ground amongst some youth. The prospect of a life once more given meaning, an alternative, a world without exploitation, repression and misery in a social system where profit makes life possible.

In addition to these “traditional” migrants there are the millions of people who are trying to flee horrific imperialist wars. They end up in the hands of unscrupulous human traffickers. If they make it to the “rich” countries, they are forced to work in those sectors where exploitation is particularly brutal, wages exceptionally low and working conditions especially degrading. By contrast, others – who, of course, do not reject the exploitation of migrants – make a scapegoat of them for social misery. Their strategy is to fuel the widespread anxiety and hysteria in society, including amongst the working class, who are unsettled by the crisis and, who, because of the lack of a tangible political and social alternative, are completely disoriented. In this situation, it is not difficult for right-wing populists, nationalists and neo-fascists to utilise the propaganda against “migrants” and “Moslems”, typically depicting them as enemies of national culture and values. It is a trap, which too often works perfectly, especially in those economically disadvantaged times with their great social dissatisfaction and political confusion. Divide and rule — this has always been an essential organisational principle of capitalist society.

**Imperialist War or Proletarian Revolution?**

Whether fully employed, in precarious part-time work or unemployed, we know from our daily experience as workers how, in their own class, they try to put the brakes on the crisis of their system. Reduced production benefits the capitalists transfers into wage workers’ insecurity, ‘flexibility’, redundancies and mass unemployment, greater competition for jobs. It means the transfer of production to where labour-power is cheaper, cuts in pensions and public spending, in education, in public health services and in public commuter transport. In short, cuts in indirect and deferred wages, where these still exist. So far, though, this class war of the rich has not yet called forth an adequate response of the working class.

Meanwhile, increasing financialisation of the economy, reflected in unprecedented financial speculation, is at once a symptom of the great problems facing the world economy and an attempt to circumvent them. They would have us believe that money can be made out of money, and the production process can be omitted.

The enormous wealth accrued in tax havens on the one hand, and the brutalisation of the working class as a result of exploitation on the other, together expose the corrupt and grasping character of capitalism. In this context, the continual dismantling of social provision and increasing ecological destruction of resources makes one thing completely clear: the further existence of capitalism is incompatible with the survival of the working class, and even humanity and the sheer existence of this planet.

Our chief enemy is in our own country! It is the bosses and capitalists at home who are exploiting us and burdening us with a life in misery. While every state, every nation, any political entity which at all participates in war and/or the preparation for future wars, is also our enemy. For the working class there is only one way out of the fateful spiral of crisis and war — rejection of every nationalist ideology in favour of international solidarity, and the common class struggle for our own interests. In short, the only war worth fighting is the class war against the exploiters. Our fight is for a society without exploitation, repression and racism. A society where the means of production are socialised and are no longer in the hands of state or private capitalists. A society where production and distribution are in harmony with humanity and nature, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

**Towards a World Working Class Party**

Capitalism is a global system and can only be fought and overcome internationally. This demands an organisational framework, the construction of a political organisation with an international structure and roots. Such an international and internationalist communist party cannot be an instrument of domination, and definitely not an electoral machine. It is, though a place for political clarification and the point of departure for the attack on the ideology, political rituals and political forms of this society. Without a communist programme anchored in the class, every strike, every revolt, every uprising will inevitably be absorbed by the forces of this society, as the experiences of recent years have shown only too well.

The working class has no fatherland and the same is true for the organisation of communists. The first step towards a real breakthrough with capitalism starts with the international political re-groupment and organisation of revolutionaries. The ICT’s goal is to contribute to this process. We do not claim to be the “Party” or even the only kernel of one but we believe we have a major contribution to make along the lines of the theoretical and political acquisitions of the Communist Left which has guided our analysis and our involvement in the class struggle. Our strategic goal now is to make a start and to break the present condition of isolation and fragmentation of internationalist forces. Capitalism dominates the entire planet and penetrates every domain of life. But this domination can be challenged if we understand how to deploy, in the daily struggles against the state and capital, that weapon that is necessary to resist the rule of bourgeoisie ideology: a world party of socialist revolution. It is time to organise!

**Statement of the Internationalist Communist Tendency**

*Just out. £7.25 [includes postage] from group address.*
The Panama Papers: The Real Scandal is Capitalism

What We Stand For

The Communist Workers’ Organisation is the British affiliate of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (formerly the IWW). Our Italian sister group the Internationalist Communist Party was formed in 1943 as the only organisation to oppose all sides in the Second World War in the name of working class autonomy. Today we have groups of comrades in several countries round the world.

We stand for a global society in which production is for need and not profit (and is therefore sustainable), where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished, where power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. It is a society which can only be created through the activity of millions of human beings. Only such a society can rid us of the capitalist offshoring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war. We call it communism but it has nothing in common with the Stalinist state capitalism of the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working to create a world proletarian political organisation: a ‘party’ for want of a better word. This organisation is not a government in waiting. It does not rule but it does lead and guide the struggle for a new world. The ICT by no means claims to be that party but only one of the elements which will come together in its formation. As the working class is more and more faced with the consequences of a crumbling capitalist system it will have to unite and confront capitalist power. The ICT is not in competition with other genuinely working class organisations but seeks to unite on a clearly agreed political programme to prepare the way for the majority of the world’s population, the exploited of the earth, to overthrow the capitalist system and its bloody imperialist apparatus.

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What the Minimum Wage Con-trick

For or the likes of Terra Firma, a debt-fuelled private equity firm run by Guy Hands from his tax haven in Guernsey, the rise in the minimum wage threatens the viability of its Four Seasons Care Homes. This is the biggest group of private health providers but it exists for nothing more than financial speculation. Terra Firma used borrowed money to take over the care homes from the Royal Bank of Scotland in 2012 and since then has been trying to prove it can turn a profit for the speculators. Four Seasons itself is a murky entity consisting of 185 companies in 15 tiers, registered in multiple jurisdictions including the UK and many tax havens. It also manages to pay no corporation tax. In fact, of course, the main source of Four Seasons revenue is the state. From the standpoint of the like of Guy Hands paying your workers a ‘living wage’ means reducing the financial flow to investors. Isn’t it obvious which is more important?

What is not obvious is the dramatic impact ‘bumping up’ the minimum wage from £6.70 to £7.20 an hour has made to the 1.8 million people, mainly women, some of them care workers, whose lives changed at the beginning of the new financial year. And, wait for it, no less than the Body Shop to announce that it is to raise its minimum wage to £9.99. And, oh yes, a gesture not before) that the system operates only for the profitability of the few. It is the same few who control the planet’s destiny. Even without tax havens the world’s governments (of all shades of opinion) will still be competing for inward financial investment by cutting taxes for the big firms. Osborne has already announced corporation tax as low as 17%, the lowest since the 1970s. It is not just offshore companies that want shutting down. It is the entire capitalist system.

The hypocrisy about rewarding hard-working families is glaring. This toying with people’s lives is the result of the state’s attempt to reduce its debt burden and preserve the financial architecture of corrupt and rotten capitalism. Osborne has also calculated on extra tax receipts derived from the so-called national living wage. Whichever way you look at it, it’s the poorest members of society who are once again going to pay.

For more on the continuing impact of state spending cuts on working class lives read: