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COUNTER INFORMATION

JULY/AUG/SEPT 1992

CONFRONTING COLUMBUS



CONQUISTADOR means 'conqueror'. One who gains by force, who subjugates. Which is what George Bush and King Juan Carlos of Spain will celebrate when they greet the tallships symbolic arrival in Liverpool later this year. The gaining by force of an entire continent and the subjugation of its Native peoples. 500 years of mass-murder, torture, rape and slavery.

When Columbus arrived in 1492, the Americas had an estimated population of 90 million people. By 1790 the Native population stood at 20 million. The onslaught continues.

A KINDER, GENTLER, GENOCIDE

For the Native population of Bush's 'kinder, gentler America', life = oppression;

Unemployment on the reservations is between 50-80%

The infant mortality rate is 3 times the national average

The tuberculosis rate is 8 times the national average

On some reservations the teenage suicide rate is ten times the national average

25% of Native women have been sterilised without informed consent

25-35% of all Native children under 18 are removed from their families by 'child welfare' and fostered, adopted or institutionalised

Another 27% are forcibly boarded-out by the racist Bureau of Indian Affairs

The average life expectancy for Native Americans is 47 years

[Source: Women of All Red Nations]

But there is, and always was, resistance. Every decade since 1492 has witnessed indigeneous revolt, from Alaska to Chile. The Seminole Wars of 1812-36 saw Native Indians joining with runaway Afrikan slaves and some marginalised whites to form a powerful anti-state force. Similar alliances were formed in S. America and the Caribbean. Such joint resistance must be a model for today's fightback, a fact recognised in the Declaration of Quito, drawn up in 1990 by 120 Native delegates from all the Americas. The Declaration states; "We must march alongside the peasants, the workers and the marginalised sectors.....in order to destroy.....oppression and construct a new society". **One world, one people . . . one struggle.**

CONFRONTING COLUMBUS

In October 1991 a mass in honour of Columbus in Seville Cathedral, Spain, was abruptly halted by hundreds of demonstrators, including Native Americans, European supporters, and local anarchists and squatters.

The same month between 30-50,000 marched through Xela in Guatemala to protest the planned 'celebrations'

The Spanish CNT [anarcho-syndicalist] has called for a total boycott and sabotage of any 500 Years 'celebrations'.

In Liverpool the anti-500 Campaign has already forced local government to change 'celebrations' to 'commemorations' on the advertising. There have been, and will be, many more actions. If you know of any, please send us an account for a future article.

The destruction of the Native Americans was the commencement of a process which has now spread world-wide.

MORE DESTRUCTION, MORE RESISTANCE

It wasn't a tall-ship that docked in Liverpool on March 3, but a boatload of Malaysian hardwood. And it wasn't greeted by visiting royalty, but a 400-strong blockade of environmental direct-actionists, including Irish, German, and US contingents. Cranes were occupied. Many demonstrators were arrested and held in a giant 'chicken-coop'. All were released when Liverpool dockers threatened to strike.

There have been similar actions in Germany and Australia, while in Sarawak itself, the displaced Penan and Dayak tribes have fought back staunchly with blockades and sabotage, sometimes supported by activists from Europe and the US, 8 of whom were deported from Sarawak after spending months in jail with Penan blockaders. Thousands of Native people have joined blockades at Long Ajeng and Sungai since 1989. Jake Burbridge of Earth First! UK, who was one of the jailed 8, says; "Things cannot get much worse. The Penan and Dayaks face total destruction of their forests by 1995".

All over the planet, in Australia, Philippines, E. Timor, Indonesia, and all the Americas, tribal peoples are being displaced and their life-styles destroyed by the clique of rich parasites who plunder the world's wealth. 73% of the world's natural resources are owned by 50 giant corporations. Every day, 50 species of flora and fauna become extinct. Meantime at the 'Earth Summit' in Brazil, the yes-men put their heads together and swap dandruff. They will change nothing. Real change comes from below. In one Brazilian province the bosses' hit-men have murdered 173 activists since 1980, but the struggle continues.

The genetic ark is being destroyed by the robber-barons. We must stop them before it gets too late. Get involved.

Contact; Earth First! UK, 9 Cazenove Rd, LONDON N16

Merseyside Green Anarchist! Earth First! meet 1st & 3rd Monday of the month at The Mutual Aid Centre, 45 Seel St, Liverpool L1

500 Years of Resistance, Box 13, 1 Newton St., Manchester M1 1HW

SPAIN; Desennmarceremos. [We Unmask 92], c/campomanes 13, 2 Piso, Madrid. CANADA; OH-TOH-KIN (new Native Resistance paper). PO Box 2881, Vancouver BC, V6B 3X4, Canada.

● PEDAL POWER

100 CYCLE Couriers and supporters took over London's Oxford St. on 30 March. Cyclists marked the death of a cycle courier run over by a TNT artic on 20 March by cycling together at a snail's pace through London's West End, briefly blocking the fatal junction and attaching a wreath to the traffic lights.

Info Moving Target.

● STILL OPEN!

CLAIMANTS are keeping Edinburgh Unemployed Workers Centre open, to provide "resources, advice and solidarity" for the unwaged, low waged, local community and all resisting injustice. They are defying a minority of Centre Trustees - including Labour Councillors Kinder and Loughney - who have illegally removed Centre equipment. EUWC, 103 Broughton St.. Open 12-4 weekdays. Tel 031 557 0718. Write c/o 1st Floor, 20 Melville Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1LY

● NO TO NUKILLER POWER

A NEW nuclear Pressurised Water Reactor is planned at Chapelcross, SW Scotland. The Chapelcross Watchdog and Action Group say "This project is dangerous and unnecessary and local people will resist it." Locals have already had a small victory in holding up the drilling of bore-holes. Contact Chapelcross Watchdog and Action Group, Bankhead Cottage, Canonbie, Dumfriesshire

Make Scotland Ungovernable

LESS than 20% of Scotland's potential electorate voted Tory. Anger at the Conservative UK election victory has led to widespread demands for a referendum on the creation of a Scottish Parliament.

The Tory rejection of a referendum exposes British "democracy" as a sham. But the referendum options of 'devolution' or 'independence' are no way forward.

Devolution - a Scottish parliament within the UK - would change virtually nothing. Labour and the Liberal Democrats would have more power, while the dominance of the UK state and big business was preserved.

Independence for Scotland would be a blow to the British ruling class. But it would do nothing to give ordinary people more control, or a better life.

A new Scottish government would be working within the capitalist set-up - multinationals, European Community and all. Its major aim would be boosting the profitability of the Scottish economy. This would mean attacks on wages, services and workers' rights - all accompanied by fervent exhortations to tighten our belts for Scotland.....

The new pro-referendum groups - Scotland United (dominated by pro-devolution Labour MPs and STUC bureaucrats), Democracy for Scotland ("a non-party political network ... seeking a consensus for change"), and Common Cause ("a Civic Forum on Scotland's democratic future") - ignore social struggle. More positively, the republican Scottish Democratic Resistance advocate "a mass campaign, locally based, no bureaucratic control".

The anger at injustice must not be diverted into a constitutional cul-de-sac! The direct action of the anti poll tax movement shows the way. Let's extend the grass-roots resistance which has made the poll tax unworkable - and make Scotland ungovernable.

Privatisation, cuts, testing primary pupils, collecting poll tax arrears, Trident, the Asylum Bill, the Child Support Act, nuclear dumping all could be made impossible to implement by mass direct action in workplaces, in schools, in hospitals, on the streets, at military bases..... These struggles will need to link up with the similar battles being fought in England, Wales, throughout Europe and world-wide.

Liberation cannot be won in Scotland alone. Like John Maclean we want "the people of the world (to) get the world and retain the world."

Send a SAE for our expanded A4 leaflet on this subject.

Whose Burden?

GOVERNMENT plans for workers to foot the bill of unification between West & East Germany suffered a setback with the Public Services strike won on the 8th May. Faced with sharp price rises, militant & enthusiastic strikers stopped transport, post & refuse collection in action taken by the OTV Union. Solidarity action occurred in many cities including Hamburg where 10,000 chanted "dustmen and metalworkers together", & in east Germany even although they were not directly involved, apart from the link to 60% of western paylevels.

On 14th May, a compromise of 5.5% was only supported by 44% of the 500,000 members, indicating

rank & file determination to resist paltry wage rises. However, the settlement of the threatened IG Metal strike forestalled an escalation of workers militancy.

Meanwhile, thousands of punks, autonomists and anarchists marched from Kreuzberg into East Berlin on Mayday, incensed at the murder of a Vietnamese citizen on 24th April. They linked "Los Angeles, Yugoslavia and all places where poor people are victims of fascism". At the Brandenburg Gate on 26th May green & citizens campaigners blocked the road by staging an impromptu party to oppose plans to open the Gate to through road traffic.



THE RAPE OF THE MAGHABERRY WOMEN

AS Republican women prisoners in Maghaberry Prison, Co Antrim, prepared to celebrate International Womens' Day, the Northern Ireland Office decided to make their own contribution.

On March 2 the women were ordered to remain in their cells to be stripsearched. Despite their strong objections, 21 women prisoners were stripped naked by gangs of male screws in riot gear and forcibly examined. Their mouths were covered to stifle screams. Each attack was heard by all the other women, who thus spent hours listening to their comrades being sexually assaulted before their own turn came.

One woman was hospitalised. All received injuries, and will have to spend long years in the very cells where they were violated.

The women have since been charged with assault because they defended themselves.

Letters of support; Carol Cullen, C2, Maghaberry Women's Prison, Old Road, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn, Co Antrim, NI.

Updates from; The Centre, 51/5 Falls Rd, BELFAST BT12.

IT DOESN'T HAPPEN HERE?

WHILE infamous cases like the Birmingham 6, Tottenham 3 and Judith Ward highlight England's horrific record of 'justice', the Scottish system has escaped embarrassment. Stephen Windsor's case could change that.

Stephen was jailed in 1985 for armed robbery and the attempted murder of two Edinburgh police officers. He was so blatantly framed that even the conservative Edinburgh Evening News gave Stephen extensive supporting coverage.

He is currently awaiting news of his appeal which, if it succeeds, will be the first ever in Scotland. Fifty other prisoners in Scottish jails are fighting their convictions. Some, like Stephen Windsor and Sammy Ralston have fought their framings tooth-and-nail, not only through the courts, but by protests, riots and hungerstrikes.

Stephen Windsor, HMP Noranside, Fern-By-Forfar, Angus, Scotland.

Inside info c/o Edinburgh Anarchist Black Cross Box 610, EH15 1UG.

MARION COMES TO BRITAIN

AS the Irish women defended themselves, prisoners in Whitemore, Britain's new £34 million top-security jail for 'problem' prisoners, held a peaceful work strike against the Marion-style techno-repression of the 'new-generation' prison regime. The strike was solid in C and D wings.

At midnight the riot squad moved in and forcibly removed strikers to the punishment block. 24 prisoners were immediately shipped off to segregation units in other jails. One of these was John Bowden who has long campaigned for prisoners' rights, and exemplifies what the State means by 'problem prisoners' - those who know their rights and are willing to fight for them.

Whitemore is a state-of-the-art model of repression. John says, "If prisoners do not organise themselves, they will be denied anyshred of human rights or dignity. A regime like Whitemore must be resisted in order to preserve one's sanity."

About 30 Whitemore strikers are still being held in various segregation units.

Write; John Bowden B41173, Seg Unit D108, HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Rd, London. Updates; Taking Liberties, PO Box 446, Sheffield

A POUND OF FLESH

THE State has exacted its revenge on 4 of the Strangeways Mutineers. After a 12-week showtrial during which the defendants sat encased in a perspex box, the 4 received a total of over 30 years.

Updates; Manchester ABC, Box 8, 1 Newton St., Piccadilly, Manchester.

CRECHING MEETINGS

Greater Pilton Childcare Action Group in Edinburgh took their campaign for free full-time childcare provision to the General Election candidates. At a public meeting in Leith they were told there was no creche and that some parents would have to look after the children in another room. Arguing that parents had a right to attend too, they confronted the candidates on their plans for childcare, while the kids played happily in front of the stage, upstaging the pompous speeches from the platform. As one of the group said, "Like other workers we too have a right to a life of our own away from work - the unwaged slavery of raising the next generation. There's no political party that'll change that, they're all full of the same crap".

COUNTER INFORMATION



Stop Racist Killers

AS STATE racism and fascism increases across Europe, so does resistance against it.

BRITAIN- Rochdale, 15th February, a BNP rally is abandoned when anti-fascists occupy the venue. Taxi drivers took strike action on 20 February in Manchester after a fellow driver is the victim of a racist murder. Two

days later 600 anti fascists sweep fascist paper sellers out of Sunderland. 28 March, thousands march through east London protesting the murder of a Tamil refugee and a police assault on two local men. Mid April, in the same area, 600 cops protect 200 fascists from a 1000 strong demo at the only election meeting the Nazis dare to hold.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA - Prague,



"Against Repression, Racism Discrimination: anarchists on the streets of Pisa, Italy on 9 May (Photo Umanita Nova)"

March. Hundreds demonstrate in the city centre against fascist activity.

DENMARK - Hagen, March 21st. 15,000 take to the streets to protest the letter bomb murder of an anti-fascist.

NETHERLANDS - Amsterdam, March 21st. About 100,000 join in anti-fascist march. Next day another 100,000 demonstrated in Brussels, Belgium against fascism.

FRANCE - In the February regional, electioneering farce, fascist Le Pen's trip to Corsica is blocked by anti-fascists. His meeting is cancelled. In Limoges, 300 occupy the runway and prevent a National Front speaker from landing. Hundreds break away from a massive anti-fascist demo in Paris on March 18th and attack the Nazi-protecting cops.

SPAIN - February 23rd, 50,000 anti-racists reclaim the centre of Barcelona, protesting police violence against immigrant Africans.

SWEDEN - a national one hour strike against racism/fascism gets massive support on 21 Feb. All schools are closed as 300,000 school children join in.

STOCKHOLM's public transport grinds to a halt, as do 2 Volvo plants when 20,000 workers down tools despite management threats. There were solidarity actions around Britain. An outdoor fascist meeting in Stockholm lasts just 15 seconds before being smashed by anti-fascists.

GERMANY - 3,000 anti fascists occupy a square in Leipzig to stop a fascist rally on 22 March. As demonstrators clash with the cops, the police helicopter suffers several hits from fireworks!

We will never pay

SOARING non-payment is boosting the anti poll tax movement's demands to scrap all the debts. Though there are now fewer anti poll tax groups, actions continue country-wide.

120 protestors besieged Highbury Court on 21 April as Islington Council attempted to jail Camden Council worker Phoebe Watkins for non-payment. Over 20 refused orders to leave the court. The case was adjourned.

Demonstrators protested at Salford Town Hall on 13 April against the Council sacking a worker for not paying the poll tax.

Campaigners invaded Haringey's Wood Green poll tax office on 19 March, demanding freedom for jailed non-payer Lingval Cousins. Unemployed Mr. Cousins was released on appeal 4 days later.

Neighbours and activists stopped

sheriff officers pouncing non-payers' homes in Gracemount (Edinburgh), Armadale and Boghall (West Lothian), Gorebridge and Mayfield (Midlothian) during April and May.

FREE THE PRISONERS

Terry Frost (2 years), Andy Hester (18 months), and Christine Hammet (9 months) were jailed in March for alleged Public Order offences at a 1990 anti poll tax demo in Colchester. Six more Colchester demo defendants face serious charges.

Following a vigorous campaign, the only remaining Trafalgar Square demo prisoner, Tim Donaghy, has been given special leave to apply for parole review. Keep up the pressure!

SOLIDARITY

Several local Anti Poll Tax Groups - including Hornsey and

Wood Green, and Tottenham (London) and Stockbridge New Town (Edinburgh) - have formed local Solidarity Networks, involved in anti racism, transport, housing, the Child Support Act and other struggles. A meeting in July will discuss creating local Solidarity Networks London-wide.

Anti Poll Tax activists from Mayfield stopped a single parent being evicted by Midlothian District Council on 4 June. The council falsely alleged rent arrears - and announced that when the woman was evicted, her 2 pre-school children would be taken into care.

The local campaigners - joined by 7 passing binmen! - picketed to defend the tenant's Mayfield home, and the Council backed down.

Donations to, and prisoners addresses etc from: PT Prisoner Support Network, c/o TSDC, 506 Brixton Rd., London SW9 8EW. Tel. 071 738 7586.

Anti Poll Tax Network: London 081 692 9181 (John); North England 061 707 1584; Scotland 031 557 0718.

A WORLD TO WIN

CHOP CHOP!

Scattered militancy and independent workers protests erupt throughout the former USSR. To forestall another major challenge from Siberian Oil & Coal workers, President Yeltsin of Russia dispatched "Rouble Trains" to buy off trouble by releasing overdue pay. President Yeltsin's walkabout in Moscow was disturbed on 12 June by a man with a meat cleaver who volunteered to enact Yeltsin's statement that he would rather chop off his own head than raise prices. Police intervened to head off the cuts!

In March **Kas-Kor** reported a prolonged strike at Ore Mines at Krivoy Rog in eastern Ukraine. Also in Ukraine, a strike of passenger transport workers escalated in days to 112 enterprises in 19 cities on March 18th. Although an accord was signed to meet wage and pension demands, the Ukrainian Government was thought likely to renege on the deal. In Lithuania, a strike against privatisation took place at the "Enja" plant in Kaunas. At Radvilishikis, railway workers blocked military and other rail traffic for 2 hours on March 25th to demand 3 weeks back-pay. Despite threats to bring in the Lithuanian army, the Government caved in.

Kas-Kor information digest, donation, from PO Box 16, Moscow 129642 (tel. 095-921-06-55).

MALAWI

22 people were killed early in May in massive anti-government rioting against the repressive regime of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

SPAIN

Metal workers blocked traffic and disrupted rail services in March in protest at the threatened closure of the factory in Cartagena.

YUGOCARNAGE

50,000 demonstrated in Belgrade on 31 May against war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, sanctions and the alliance of Socialist president Milosevic with chetnik(fascist) forces executing civilians in occupied Bosnian territory and laying siege to Sarajevo.

EAST TIMOR

Fernando de Araujo, an East Timorese dissident, was sentenced in May to 9 years for organising protests against the Indonesian genocide & occupation and the 180+ deaths in November 1991 at an anti-Occupation demonstration.

ROBIN HOOD LIVES

"Robin Hood" is alive & defending the forest folk from terror. Not in Sherwood but Sokhulu, Zululand. Simon Msweli, has acquired a fearsome reputation by resisting killers & extortionists with his home-made rifle(a qwasha), leading 30 Sokhulu families living in forest hovels, to escape the terror of the KwaZulu Inkatha thugs.

BURN BABY BURN

ON 29 April a jury of racist cop-lovers acquitted four cops who had battered a black motorist nearly to death. For the poor blacks of Los Angeles, the knowledge that four racist scum had swaggered free out of court was the final obscenity in a country where black people's average income is 58% of that of whites, where one young black man in three is in prison, on bail or on probation, and where black male unemployment is twice the average.

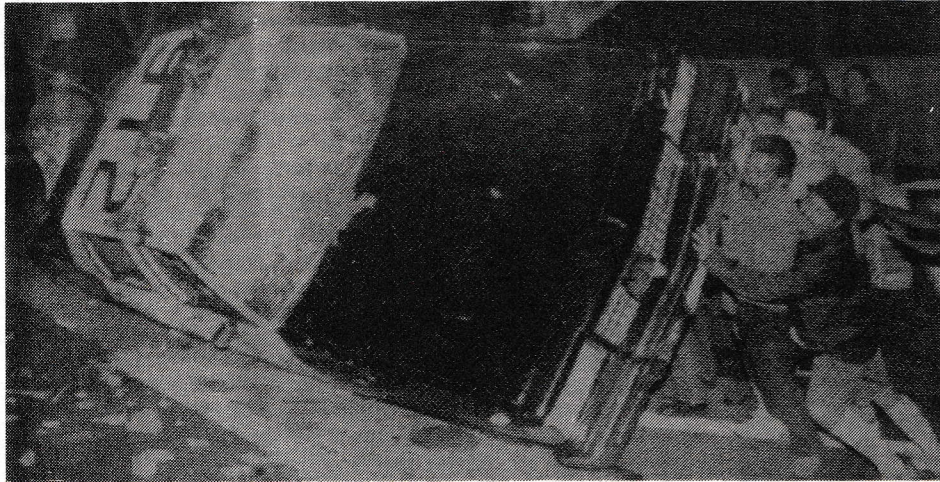
Rioting and looting spread to cities elsewhere on the west coast (Eugene, San Jose, Seattle, Las Vegas, where the National Guard were called out and most notably San Francisco, where there were 1,900 arrests), to other parts of the country (Madison in the north, Atlanta and Birmingham in the south), and to a number of cities in Canada (Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver). Clashes also occurred in New York and Washington. What had become the biggest uprising in the

by the black poor. Insurgents took the fight to Hollywood and Beverly Hills, home to many millionaires. Middle class vigilantes sided with the Police to defend their wealth and property. Reported post-riot deals between gang leaders and Korean shopkeepers (who tried to shoot looters) may make gang members increasingly contemptuous of their leaders, for whom, as for all capitalists, profit clearly comes first.

"In the last twenty years this country buried the poor and rebellious under an iceberg of fashion, racism and wars on drugs. This carefully tailored image of America has shattered.

It's not just poverty that weighs down the people in the ghettos. It's having the police terrorize and brutalize you. ... It's not having power over the simplest things in your life and not being expected to have the intelligence. ... It's being shown movie stars that you can never be like and being shown fancy clothes you can never buy. The riots happened when anger that had been building for years exploded. This anger became power."

From a leaflet published by A.S.A.N., PO BOX 3305, Oakland CA 94609, USA.



CLASS WAR

Poor people of all colours joined the uprising and had a ball taking back some of what has been stolen from them in terms of space, time and goods. Whole areas were taken over and then defended with armed force against the cops. Attacks were launched against the police HQ, the city hall, courthouses and the offices of the LA Times. Cops and security guards came under sniper fire across the city, and a police helicopter was shot at with an automatic. The destruction of some 5000 buildings - denied to the enemy forever - made it clear that what was happening was outright war.

Not only was space taken back from the state, but time was seized from the bosses. Many workers for the local council simply 'forgot' about going to work, and the mayor (a black former cop) had to threaten them with loss of pay.

BOYZ 'N THE HOOD

But looting broke out on a huge scale, and for that you don't need money. People liberated food, alcohol, TVs, shoes, clothes, firearms, videos, toilet paper, anything they wanted. They filled trolleys and wheeled them out to their cars. At one vast store, cops had to fight their way through a proletarian traffic-jam at the front while looting continued from the warehouses at the rear. People without access to cars got away with as much as they could carry. Sometimes human chains were formed to pass looted food to waiting cars and passers-by. And once the supermarkets were stripped, they were burnt to the ground: not for a long time will the poor have to face with the vile American 'dream' of flashy goods they can't afford to buy.

western world for a generation was also greeted in Berlin, where rioters attacked cops and brandished banners saying "Congratulations LA"

In LA order was restored only after Bush sent in 13000 troops from the military and the National Guard. There were 1,200 arrests. Around 55 people were killed: at least three-quarters were black, mostly shot by the cops.

ONE RACE - THE RAT RACE

Poor blacks and Hispanics are definitely at the bottom of the American pile, but the poor of other colours have little to rejoice about. For three-quarters of the population wages have fallen steadily since 1973. Federal aid to the cities has been halved since 1980, and whole districts have been reduced to Third-World levels of poverty. So it's no surprise that the LA uprising was no race riot.

Racial attacks did take place, carried out by whites and blacks but they were overshadowed by the general atmosphere of working class unity. This unity worked against divisions and set a new precedent in the country.

LA's world famous street gangs have 100,000 members. Many of the youths who roamed the streets encouraging people to attack the rich areas were wearing gang colours, and the two main gangs the Bloods and the Crips even declared a ceasefire among themselves in unity against the police. Significantly, this was 2 days *before* the uprising.

It is clear that it was in many ways *conscious* class war. Many poor whites, Koreans and Hispanics took part as well as blacks. Stores with signs saying 'black-owned' were looted and burnt out regardless

GET INVOLVED!

If you like what you've read in Counter Information, we invite you to write to the CI collective, and also to the other groups listed below:

London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1

Tottenham Solidarity Network, c/o 72 West Green Rd., London N15.

Stockbridge New Town Solidarity Network c/o

J. Ball, 24 Dean Park St., Edinburgh EH4 1JT.

Class War : PO Box 496, Glasgow G14 0PG

: PO Box 1021, Edinburgh EH8 9PW

(plus groups Britain-wide).

AK Distribution, 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling FK8

2RD (books, mags, pamphlets on mail order)

(If your group would like to be considered for listing, please write to the CI Edinburgh address)

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