

AGENDA ITEM 4



INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL TRUST

www.international-brigades.org.uk

Annual General Meeting: Hull, 13 October 2018

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

1/ INTRODUCTION

This has been another busy and productive year for the IBMT, with a host of activities throughout Britain, Ireland and Spain supplementing the three national events in the IBMT calendar: the Len Crome Memorial Conference, the commemoration at the International Brigade memorial on London's Southbank and the Annual General Meeting weekend. At the same time, considerable resources continue to be devoted to communications and publicity, particularly our *iNo Pasarán!* magazine, IBMT eNewsletter, website and social media. The past 12 months have also seen efforts to stabilise the Trust's finances. Following deficits recorded over three consecutive years, the IBMT Executive Committee agreed a zero-deficit operating budget for 2018/19. This involves some cuts to expenditure and renewed efforts to boost income. The launch this autumn of the IBMT raffle and the Friends of the IBMT scheme is part of this process and we hope everyone will give them maximum support. Finally, the year has been enlivened by the 'discovery' of another last surviving British veteran of the International Brigades: Geoffrey Servante, who was interviewed in the 2-2018 issue of *iNo Pasarán!*.

2/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee has met three times: on 28 October 2017 and on 3 February and 2 June 2018. As well as President Marlene Sidaway, the IBMT Officers have been Richard Baxell (Chair), Jim Jump (Secretary) and Manuel Moreno (Treasurer). Other Executive Committee members elected last year are Mike Arnott, Lisa Croft, Pauline Fraser, Alex Gordon, Mary Greening, Christopher Hall, John Haywood, Marshall Mateer, Manus O'Riordan and

Richard Thorpe. The following additional duties and titles were assigned to members: Mike Arnott: Scotland Secretary; Lisa Croft: North West Representative; Mary Greening: Membership Secretary and Wales Secretary; Christopher Hall: Merchandise Officer; Jim Jump: Editor; Marshall Mateer: Film Coordinator; Manus O'Riordan: Ireland Secretary; Marlene Sidaway: Exhibition Coordinator; Richard Thorpe: Education Officer and Social Media Officer. Pauline Fraser was given responsibility for dealing with general email enquiries and Alex Gordon and John Haywood were appointed the IBMT's Auditors.

3/ IBMT OFFICE

The IBMT continues to rent an office at its registered office at Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU, where we use the services of freelance helpers in the IBMT office within a budget of £5,000 per year. In the longer term the Executive Committee remains committed to employing an IBMT National Coordinator & Fundraiser.

4/ MEMBERSHIP

Membership on 31 December 2017 stood at 856. This was 96 fewer than at the same time 12 months earlier. Broken down by regions, the membership figures for the end of last year were: London & South East 314 / Scotland 116 / North West 97 / Midlands 91 / South West 65 / Yorkshire & North East 59 / Ireland 48 / Wales 47 / Rest of world 19. This year we have redoubled efforts to chase up lapsed members and to encourage union affiliations. The Executive Committee has also decided to introduce a new £10 a year

membership category aimed at young people, who would receive the IBMT eNewsletter but not the printed IBMT magazine. In addition, we will be launching this autumn a Friends of the IBMT scheme for members who donate at least £50 a year to the Trust.

5/ INDEPENDENT MEMORIAL GROUPS

The Executive Committee has agreed a set of guidelines covering the IBMT's relations with other International Brigade memorial groups around the country. The guidelines have been posted on the About page of the IBMT website. They seek to encourage the activities of independent local and regional groups, who are invited to affiliate to the IBMT, while at the same time making it clear that they cannot use the name of the IBMT to raise money or promote their activities without the prior approval of the IBMT Executive Committee.

6/ ¡NO PASARÁN!

Three issues of the IBMT magazine, now called ¡No Pasarán!, have been published since our last AGM. The magazine is an exclusive benefit of membership. No copies are now given away free, and the magazine only goes online once a new issue has been published.

7/ IBMT eNEWSLETTER, WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The IBMT eNewsletter continues to keep members informed of IBMT activities and events linked to the International Brigades and Spanish Civil War. From August the IBMT eNewsletter has also been automatically posted on our website. The Executive Committee remains committed to redesigning our website, once resources so permit. Page views of the IBMT website continue to average more than 300 a day, with roughly one-third being first-time visits. Numbers following on Facebook (4,828) and Twitter (3,545) continue to grow. Currently one post is scheduled daily, promoting the memorials and IBMT activities. The first appeal on social media for people to visit the memorials in Jarama week had some success. The list of memorials on the website has been updated with new and previously unrecorded sites. A search for images of the memorials means now only five memorials have no picture on the website. The three annual IBMT events were fully recorded for the archive

with selections on YouTube's IBMTnews and Flickr, including Yolanda Vázquez reading La Pasionaria's farewell speech to the International Brigades. Work to develop an online 'video search' continues. The first in a new series of films 'About the IBMT' is in production, as is a documentary following the story and development of the new Hull memorial.

8/ BIOGRAPHICAL DATABASE OF VOLUNTEERS

Work on the online biographical database of all the volunteers from Britain and Ireland was completed at the end of 2017 and a link to the database is now on the opening page of the IBMT website. For technical reasons the database cannot be posted on our website; the link instead takes the browser to the website of the historian and IBMT Chair Richard Baxell. The Executive Committee has agreed to launch an appeal for the funding necessary to pay for the database to be converted into a format which can be posted on the IBMT website.

9/ ARCHIVES

The digital re-cataloguing of the Marx Memorial Library's extensive archives of the International Brigades and Spanish Civil War was completed earlier this year. The IBMT was a partner in the library's successful application for funding from The National Archives for this major project. As part of the application, the IBMT pledged to commit £1,000 towards the promotion of the archives. Platform Films has been contracted to produce five short videos for social media on themes relating to the material in the archives: trade unions, internationalism, anti-fascism, women and refugees.

10/ LONDON SOUTHBANK COMMEMORATION

The IBMT's annual commemoration in London Southbank's Jubilee Gardens took place on 7 July. Though still well attended, numbers were down on last year, probably because of the World Cup and the heatwave. Guest speakers and performers included Na-mara, Jon Trickett MP and Yolanda Vázquez, who read the speech given by La Pasionaria at the farewell parade for the International Brigades on 28 October 1938. The 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Ebro was also remembered, with grandchildren of volunteers who took part in the battle – Emma Davey, Barney Green and Gideon Long – reading extracts from

memoirs. Afterwards there was an informal gathering at the nearby Horse & Stables pub.

11/ LEN CROME MEMORIAL CONFERENCE

The 2018 Len Crome Memorial Conference was held at Bristol's Colston Hall on 24 March, the first time it has been held outside London or Manchester. Guest speakers Tom Buchanan and Emily Mason addressed subjects related to the Aid Spain movement. The 1936 film 'The Defence of Madrid' was screened and there was music from Ewan McLennan, Amanda Boyd and David Nash and the Red Notes Choir. The event was well attended and was generally agreed to have been a success. Next year's conference will be held in Oxford on 23 March, with the theme of football and the Spanish Civil War.

12/ MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIONS

Since our last AGM, new memorials have been unveiled in **Bolton** (to the local volunteers), **Caerleon** (to the Basque Children), **Leicester** (to the local volunteers), **Hull** (to the local volunteers; planned for 13 October), **Irvine** (to John Smith), **Manchester** (to Madge Addy), **Merthyr Tydfil** (re-installation of memorial in storage), **Preston** (to Mary Slater), **Wickham Market** (to the Basque Children) and **Wigan** (to the local volunteers). In addition new memorials to the International Brigades have been inaugurated in Spain in **Caspe**, the Madrid suburb of **Vicálvaro** and **El Perelló**, where the IBMT has paid for a plaque to two British Battalion members discovered to have been buried in the municipal cemetery. There are also active plans for new memorials in **Burnley** (to local volunteers), **Cardiff** (to the Stanbrook crew), **Colne** (to local volunteers), **Glasgow** (to merchant seafarers), **Inverness** (to local volunteers), **Stepney** (information board at the Cable Street mural), **Stockton-on-Tees** (to the local volunteers) and **Watermillock** (to the Basque Children). The IBMT encourages the holding of commemorations at International Brigade memorials and is pleased to note that such gatherings have taken place at many memorials, including those at **Aberdeen**, **Belfast**, **Birmingham**, **Cardiff**, **Clowne**, **Dundee**, **Edinburgh**, **Glasgow**, **Halifax** (planned for 6 October), **Hull**, **Kirkcaldy**, **Manchester**, **Motherwell**, **Oxford**, **Reading** and **Renton**. Meanwhile the IBMT continues to support the work

of our Madrid-based sister organisation, the AABI International Brigades friendship group, which hosts an annual commemoration at **Jarama** in February and other events during the year.

13/ ANTIFASCISTAS EXHIBITION

Antifascistas remains an attractive and informative tool in our efforts to bring knowledge about the International Brigades to a wider public. The exhibition was at the Len Crome Memorial Conference in Bristol in March and remained there until May for the book fair and anti-fascist weekends. We are now in discussions about displaying it at other events in the city. The exhibition is booked for Halifax early October, just before the AGM in Hull.

14/ MERCHANDISE

This year prices of our merchandise were increased for the first time (Executive Committee decision). This led to an initial drop in sales but is now back to previous year levels. New products this year include a women's anti-fascist t-shirt, Republican and International Brigade keyrings, Republican earrings and brooch, red three-pointed star earrings and brooch, a new mug and a Pasionaria tin badge. Merchandise is sold via the website and at events throughout the country and continue to earn the Trust useful income and, more importantly, are a way of promoting our message to non-members.

15/ EDUCATION

The IBMT education material has been moved to a dedicated section of the Times Educational Supplement website of teaching resources (www.tes.com/teaching-resources). The lesson plans focusing on the Spanish Civil War in local areas has been expanded. Resources for each venue The Young'uns played during their Ballad of Johnny Longstaff tour were provided. The plan is to add to this to provide every area with local Spanish Civil War materials.

16/ THE IBMT AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The drive to increase the involvement and visibility of young people at IBMT events was in evidence at the annual commemoration and is planned to continue at the AGM weekend in Hull. Contacts with organisations such as Young Labour and the Woodcraft Folk are being developed. A 'young

persons' membership has been introduced, and the image collection, 'Young People and the Spanish Civil War', is on Pinterest.

17/ 'THE BALLAD OF JOHNNY LONGSTAFF'

A highlight of the past year was a nationwide tour in March and April by the award-winning folk trio The Young'uns performing 'The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff', a suite of songs inspired by the International Brigades and named after the International Brigader who, like the group itself, was a native of Stockton-on-Tees. The Young'uns gave generous publicity to the IBMT while on tour. Further performances of 'The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff' are planned for this year and 2019, including a live album recording.

18/ IRELAND

Ongoing 80th anniversary commemorations of the Spanish Civil War were the dominant aspect of activities over the past year. Lectures included one by the IBMT Ireland Secretary in Cork Public Library in November, marking the centenary of the birth of his father Michael O'Riordan. Battle of the Ebro commemorations were held in Waterford in August and in Omeath, County Louth in September. During the FIBI (Friends of the International Brigades in Ireland) Ebro battlefield tour in May, a portrait of Michael O'Riordan carrying the flag of Catalonia by Barcelona artist Pere Piquer was unveiled in the Museu de Gandesa. On September 23 a plaque is to be unveiled to Jack Nalty by Dublin's East Wall History Group. In the same month, a plaque is being erected to nurse Ruth Ormesby in her native Sligo.

19/ SCOTLAND

25 November, Edinburgh: Gallo Rojo, ARMH benefit. 26 January, Dumfries: 'The Ebro Remembered' meeting. 7-17 February, Prestonpans and Glasgow: '549 Scots of the Spanish Civil War', play by Wonder Fools; all performances sold out. 15-16 February: Tarancón commemoration and 'Guerrilla DIY' at No.2 Hospital. 14-15 April, Edinburgh: Gallo Rojo organised Día de la República commemoration. Conor Cheyne in Inverness regenerating campaign for memorial in Highlands & Islands. Research assisted: families of John Angus, James Learmonth, James McIlroy, Donald Gallie; university students: Elliot Grater 'Commemoration of International Brigades in

Glasgow', Kirsty Robbins: 'Role of IBMT in Commemorations', Samuel Levitt: 'Brigader links to West Highland Way', Sean Smith: 'How the Women of Scotland Fought Franco'.

20/ WALES

A successful IBMT AGM and commemoration weekend was held in Cardiff on 13-15 October 2017. Produced by IB Cymru, the bilingual exhibition 'Wales and the Spanish Civil War' consists of 10 roller panels and is available on loan. 'You are Legend – The Welsh Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War' by Graham Davies is now available from Welsh Academic Press and other outlets.

21/ NORTH-WEST ENGLAND

Manchester May Day talk by Dolores Long about the Battle of the Ebro. IBMT stalls at Manchester Histories Festival, Burnley May Day, Preston Peoples Festival, York Cycle Rally and South Yorkshire Festival. North-West banner at the unveiling of the Leicester memorial and Atocha massacre commemoration in Madrid. North-West exhibition at Museum of Wigan Life and shopping centre. With trade union support a North-West IBMT gazebo has been acquired. There are plans for three new memorial plaques.

22/ THANKS

The Executive Committee places on record its gratitude for the support given to the Trust over this past year by all members and affiliated organisations, especially those who have attended, taken part or organised IBMT activities or who have made donations to help fund our work. In all our collective efforts our aim remains to ensure the long-term viability of the IBMT in order to help keep alive the inspiring story of the volunteers as a supreme example of international solidarity and anti-fascism. ¡No pasarán! They shall not pass!

September 2018