**Billy Bragg Knox May 2019 Public Event**

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Hosted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Proposal to partner with the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike Centenary Conference

In Spring 2018 CCPA Manitoba and the Labour History Conference agreed to explore the potential to co-host an event that would bring in a speaker at a public event. Several meetings took place with various representatives of the Conference committee and CCPA Manitoba. We wish to explore further if we can fulfill the vision of this partnership.

**Who:**

Billy Bragg, English singer-song writer, political activist and public speaker, in conversation with Jeremy Scahill, journalist, author and co-founding director of The Intercept, online news publication.

**What:**

Public talk, performance and Q and A with audience with 1,100 in attendance as part of the anniversary events of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

Some details:

* These events are often in partnership with a group connected to the speaker, for example in 2016 Naomi Klein was hosted in partnership with 350.org and 2017 Angela Davis was with Black Space Winnipeg and QPOC
* The main event is followed by a meet-and-greet reception for $100 ticket holders who can meet the speaker and enjoy wine and cheese.
* Student rate tickets are available
* A sponsor is sought to offer no-cost tickets to activists and youth
* A limited amount of table are available to activists groups.

**When:**

May 2019

**Where:**

Knox United Church. CCPA Manitoba has hosted public events previously at Knox with intellectuals and activists Naomi Klein, Angela Davis and Amy Goodman.

**Why:**

The Knox events hosted by CCPA Manitoba at Knox have several goals:

* Create space for progressive intellectual and activist knowledge exchange through hosting internationally-recognized authors
* Host a large-scale event to bring together over 1,000 people concerned about social, economic and environmental justice. The events are energizing as people can see many others are also concerned the same issues as they are.
* Do media relations to have the progressive ideas shared at the talk reported on in the media.
* Raise awareness about CCPA Manitoba, a non-profit charitable research institute. The events hosted in partnership with a community group shared a portion of the proceeds.

**How:**

CCPA Manitoba has done the bulk of the organizing for these events and the partners have enjoyed profile from the publications materials. James Paterson is a consultant working with CCPA Manitoba to produce the Knox events.

It is helpful to curate these events with interesting formats to stimulate and engage with the audience.

We propose Jeremy Scahill of the Intercept do an interview format style event with Bill Bragg. This would create an engaging event where the audience follows the conversation of these two activists. Scahilll's presence would bridge Bragg's long-standing progressive work with a progressive journalist with a strong online following who shares those values. Scahill’s name on the bill will also add to the draw to the event for those who follow his work. This format adds an International audience to the event and the anniversary of the 1919 Strike.

Scahill could be introduced by CCPA Manitoba director, Molly McCracken. The 1919 Winnipeg General Strike Centennary Conference would be highlighted.

We have been successful with sold-out or close to sold out events in the past. This is due to launching the advertising campaign early (4 – 5 months in advance), promotions through media and social media, postering and via CCPA Manitoba’s individual, union and non-profit supporters and relationships with local groups.

A budget with ticket price point options will be developed. The budget includes options for sponsorship from unions and groups that share our values. It is important that the event raise money for CCPA Manitoba, to compensate for staff time on the event and also to aid in CCPA Manitoba’s ongoing fundraising efforts so that we may publish progressive research and commentary.

**An opportunity for the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike Centenary Conference**

Partnering with CCPA Manitoba on this event would provide profile to the Conference to those at the Bragg event, through event promotions and potentially media on the event. A portion of the tickets could be set aside for Conference participants and they could experience the Knox venue and event. It would also profile the conference to an international audience via the Scahill podcast.

**How could this work with the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike Centenary Conference schedule?**

The Labour History Conference is taking place at the University of Winnipeg. A social event is planned on Friday evening with potentially Billy Bragg performing at the Ukrainian Labour Temple. The Conference proposed that Bragg do the CCPA MB Knox event on Sunday but three events in one weekend will affect the draw of all three events plus Sunday is notoriously a challenging day of the week to draw people out to events.

Would the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike Centenary Conference consider combining events on Friday evening? The University of Winnipeg is a 5 – 10 minute walk to Knox Church. Conference participants could attend the performance and talk at Knox and then the social event at the Ukrainian Labour Temple. Or conversely, a Conference event takes place at the Ukrainian Labour Temple with the speaking event afterward.

We propose to partner so as to make Billy Bragg accessible to more working class people, at a $20 - $30 ticket price (plus no-cost tickets for youth/ activists as described above) at a Knox event. Partnering could mean Bragg’s fee would be shared, potentially lowering the cost for all organizations involved. A set aside of seats and tickets would be done for the Conference at an agreed upon cost.

The schedule could look something like this:

Option A

6:15 pm doors open Knox

7:00 pm talk / performance begins

8:30 pm talk / performance ends

8:45 pm – bus to Ukrainian Labour Temple for conference attendees to attend social

8:45 pm – meet and greet event in Knox basement for those who pay $100 ticket price

Option B

5:00 – 7:30 pm – social wine and cheese at Ukrainian Labour Temple for conference participants

7:15 – doors open at Knox

7:30 pm – conference participants bus to Knox, seats set aside

8:00 pm – talk / performance

9:30 pm – talk / performance ends

9:45 pm – meet and greet event in Knox basement for those who pay $100 ticket price, potentially conference participants

Respectfully we can appreciate the Conference is complex. Thank you for your time and consideration of this proposal.