

BIEN - BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK

BIEN was founded in 1986 and aims to serve as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income, and to foster informed discussion on this topic throughout Europe.

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BIEN's NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to over 1000 subscribers throughout Europe and beyond.

Requests for free subscription and items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes are to be sent to BIEN's secretary: Philippe Van Parijs, UCL, Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, <<mailto:bien@basicincome.org>> .

Web site: <http://www.basicincome.org>.

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6. About BIEN

1. EDITORIAL

The early Summer saw two important events for the future of the discussion of basic income in Europe. On June 24th, the French MP Christine Boutin, leader of the centre-right Forum des républicains sociaux organised in Paris France's most significant public event on basic income so far. On July 10th, a number of personalities close to the green party, the East German PDS and various grass-root organisations convened the founding meeting of what has become the Netzwerk Grundeinkommen, Germany's national basic income network. You will find in this issue a brief report on each of them.

You will also find in this issue a brief preview of a massive collective volume generated by BIEN's 2002 Geneva Congress. This volume will be officially launched in September in Barcelona.

Thanks to the efficient co-operation of the impressive local organising team, the Red Renta Basica, Catalonia's Institute of Human Rights and the Universal Forum of Cultures, the preparation of our Barcelona congress is progressing according to schedule. The programme and

practical details remains essentially as announced previously. Updates can be found on the relevant web sites (see below). A poster is being sent as an attachment to a separate message. As usual, the congress will enable BIEN's General Assembly to meet. In the light of discussions on this issue at two earlier General Assembly meetings, proposals will be submitted to the General Assembly for the creation of a worldwide federation of basic income networks and for adjusting BIEN's structures accordingly.

We look forward to meeting many of you in Barcelona.

The Executive Committee

2. TENTH CONGRESS OF THE BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK

"The Right to a Basic Income: Egalitarian Democracy"

Barcelona (Spain), 19-20 September 2004

2.1. Registration and programme

The full programme of the congress and many other details can be found on BIEN's web site:

<http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/Resources/Congress2004.htm>

In case of problem in accessing it, contact our web manager Jurgen De Wispelaere

<jurgen.dewispelaere@ucd.ie>.

More information about the congress, the surrounding events, accommodation, etc. can be found on the web site of the Forum. That is also where you can register on line:

<http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/eventos/dialogos/ficha.cfm?IdEvento=185&IdTipoPest=1>

For any further information relating to the congress, contact

- Jose Antonio Noguera <jose.noguera@uab.es>, chairman of the scientific committee, or

- David Casassas <casassas@eco.ub.es>, BIEN conference organiser.

2.2. BIEN General Assembly Meeting

BIEN's 10th General Assembly meeting will be held on Monday the 20th of September 2004 from 6 to 8pm. As usual, it will have to elect an executive committee for the next two years and chose a venue for the next conference. Ilona Ostner (co-chair), Alexander de Roo (treasurer) and Philippe Van Parijs (secretary) have expressed their intention not to seek re-election on the committee, while remaining available to support BIEN in other ways.

This meeting will also be an opportunity to tackle head on the question of the creation of a worldwide network of basic income networks, possibly by turning BIEN itself into such a network, as advocated repeatedly by Senator Eduardo Suplicy. All members of BIEN whose address is known to us will receive proposals for adjusting BIEN's statutes in this direction one month in advance of the meeting, as required by article 3 of our statutes. These are available on

<http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/BIEN/Statutes.htm>.

3. OTHER EVENTS

PARIS (FR), 24 June 2004: LE DIVIDENDE UNIVERSEL

A one-day conference on basic income was organised at the Assemblée nationale (the French Parliament), under the title « Quel travail, quelle cohésion sociale pour le XXI^e siècle ? Le Dividende Universel, une réponse innovante et fédératrice ». This was no doubt the most conspicuous public event ever organised on basic income in France. Here is the background.

On 17 April 2003, France's Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin had asked Christine Boutin, leader of the Forum des Républicains Sociaux and member of the pro-government majority in the National Assembly ("Union pour la majorité présidentielle" - UMP), to write a report on the causes of social exclusion in France. This report was presented on 29 September 2003 and advocated, under the label "dividende universel", the idea of an unconditional basic income of Euro 300, granted to all without means test or work requirement. Although Boutin had long been labelled very conservative, because of her shrill opposition to gay civil unions and her Catholic approach to ethical issues, she is now supporting a new "social line" within the centre-right UMP.

The conference aimed both to launch a political discussion on basic income in France and to state publicly her stance on social issues.

The conference started with a long debate on the labelling of the proposal. According to Maurice Druon, the 86-old permanent secretary of the Académie française and participant in the first panel, the "dividend" notion used in Boutin's report was too much of a reference to capitalist institutions. Furthermore, he argued, the attribute "universal" should only be used in the case of a genuine worldwide basic income. Accordingly, Druon proposed to rename the idea "dotation générale de citoyenneté", which seemed to satisfy at least part of the audience. More seriously, he stressed that a basic income reform package would need to include a transformation of the French nationality laws, still based on the *droit du sol*. Otherwise, Druon claimed, every pregnant woman on earth would converge to France in order to give birth to a basic-income-entitled French citizen.

The debates subsequently revolved around possible effects of the introduction of a basic income in France, as well as around its political and economical feasibility. Didier Livio, a businessman and former president of the "Centre des jeunes dirigeants" ("Center for Young Business Leaders"), held a strong plea in favour of the idea. In his view, a basic income represents an elegant and ethically compelling way of redistributing part of the wealth generated by capitalism, while at the same time allowing for more flexible combinations of work and leisure. Other participants scrutinized a specific proposal inspired by the French economist and BIEN life member Yoland Bresson. If implemented, his proposal would allow for the payment of a unconditional benefit of EUR 330 per month. For Bresson, sometimes described as a "gaulliste de gauche" and no doubt instrumental in popularising the idea of a basic income in Christine Boutin's circles, this was a glorious day, which he said is going to "give a fresh start to the idea of basic income".

In addition to Boutin herself, two prominent French politicians took part in the exchanges. The Socialist MP and former minister Jean Le Garrec stressed that basic income was a "totally utopian project", yet looked sympathetically at the idea, interpreted the *prime pour l'emploi* (a refundable tax credit targeted at low-paid workers introduced in 2001 by Lionel Jospin's socialist government) as an important step in this direction, and expressed his support for further reforms of minimum income schemes in the same direction. The former minister and current chairman of the Finance Commission at the French Parliament, Pierre Mehaignerie (a member of the "centrist" component of Chirac's UMP) was more frankly enthusiastic about the proposal but expressed some serious reservations about its political feasibility. Unexpectedly, though, he suggested one should launch a basic income experiment in limited areas, such as in the DOM-TOM, France's overseas territories where the proportion of beneficiaries of the existing guaranteed income scheme (RMI) is particularly high.

Most of the day was focused on the French context, but the late afternoon turned international, with two life members of BIEN showing up to present their experience with political action towards a basic income in their respective countries. Roland Duchâtelet, president of Belgium's basic income party VIVANT (and unsuccessful candidate for the European Parliament in a cartel list with the Prime Minister's liberal party VLD), argued that in order to foster public interest in the idea one should never start with abstract talks on the "right to laziness". Instead, he said, it is of great importance to show that a basic income is the only way to get rid of unemployment. He also stated that public opinion and the media were to be targeted before political leaders, for the latter would only follow their electorate. In an emotional speech (in French!), Eduardo Suplicy, Brazilian senator (worker's party) and the father of the world's first basic income law (2004), argued that a basic income will help end poverty in the South as well as in industrialized countries.

Finally, Christine Boutin closed the conference with an extremely resolute plea for the gradual implementation of a basic income in France. Using the metaphor of "universality", she said that basic income was not only universal in the sense that it was given to all, but also in the sense that it had to be researched by experts from all disciplines and supported by political actors from all sides, including the communists. "I will soon ask the government", she said, "to launch a feasibility study of the universal dividend".

More info: <http://www.dividendeuniversel.org/> and boutinchri@aol.com

ROSKILDE (DK), 27-28 August 2004: Workshop "Basic income and negative income tax"

A workshop chaired by BIEN life member Erik Christensen within the framework of a European conference on "The Future of the European Welfare States: social, political and economic perspectives". Keynote speakers include Gøsta Esping Andersen, James Galbraith, Riccardo Petrella and Jørgen Goul Andersen

BARCELONA (ES), 17 September 2004: FOURTH SYMPOSIUM OF THE RED RENTA BASICA
As a prologue to BIEN's 10th Congress, Spain's basic income network, which is also actively involved in the organisation of the Congress, will hold its fourth annual meeting. Three detailed studies about how a basic income could be financed in Spain will be presented and discussed. **The programme is available on <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/index.php>.**
For further information: "Daniel Raventos" <ravento@eco.ub.es>

NEW YORK (US), 4-6 March 2005: FOURTH CONGRESS OF USBIG: The Right to Economic Security

The Fourth Congress of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network (USBIG) will be held in conjunction with the Eastern Economic Association Annual Conference in New York City at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers in Midtown Manhattan, Friday March 4 to Sunday March 6, 2005. Featured speakers will include Wade Rathke (founder of ACORN, the largest community organization of low and moderate-income families in the USA), Eduardo Suplicy (Brazilian Senator and sponsor of the new law that will begin phasing in the world's first national basic income guarantee in Brazil next year), and Philippe Van Parijs (professor of political philosophy at Louvain and Harvard, cofounder of BIEN).

Scholars, activists, and others are invited to attend, to propose papers & presentations, and to organize panel discussions. Proposals are welcome on topics relating to the Basic Income Guarantee or to the current state of poverty and inequality. They should be sent to Karl@Widerquist.com by November 7, 2004.

For more information see the USBIG website (<http://www.usbig.net>) or contact Karl Widerquist (Karl@Widerquist.com).

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

GERMANY: A NATIONAL NETWORK GETS OFF THE GROUND

Over 50 persons from different universities, political parties, trade unions and associations converged on the 9th of July 2004 to Berlin's Wissenschaftszentrum, where BIEN's 2000 Congress was held, in order to found the "Netzwerk Grundeinkommen", Germany's Basic Income Network. The founding members identified four criteria to distinguish an unconditional Basic Income from other proposals of social reform, and thereby define the network's constitutive idea: it should provide enough to live on (existenzsichernd), it should not be household-based but strictly individual (individueller Rechtsanspruch), it should not be conditional upon a needs test (keine Bedürftigkeitsprüfung) and it should entail no duty to perform paid work (kein Zwang zur Arbeit). The "Netzwerk Grundeinkommen" does not advocate a specific model for financing a Basic Income but focuses on those four criteria. A basic income is therefore meant to secure social inclusion through the provision of an adequate income. Entitlement to it is independent of any claim to support from spouses, parents and adult children. While insensitive to variation in needs, a Basic Income scheme should of course fit into a reformed system of taxes and contributions. Finally, the right to a basic income should not be linked to an obligation to work, but rather empower a new pluralism of work and activity.

The new "Netzwerk Grundeinkommen" expressed its commitment to fostering an open debate about the introduction of a Basic Income in Germany that will involve political decision-makers, economic and social organizations, trade unions and other social movements. It intends to do so in close connection with the "Basic Income European Network (BIEN)".

The founding meeting appointed a board ("Sprecherkreis") of five people, each in her/his personal capacity :

- Ronald Blaschke (German Association of the Jobless - Arbeitslosenverband Deutschland)

<Rblaschke@aol.com>

- Katja Kipping (Deputy Chairwoman of the Party of Democratic Socialism - PDS)

<katja.kipping@web.de>

- Michael Opielka (Co-ordinator of the Institute for Social Ecology and professor at Jena's University of Applied Sciences) <michael.opielka@isoe.org>
- Wolfram Otto (Federal Association of Social Assistance Claimants - BAG SHI) <wolframotto@web.de>
- Birgit Zenker (Chairwoman of the German Catholic Labour Movement - Katholische Arbeitnehmerbewegung KAB) <birgit.zenker@kab.de>
The board established a homepage and a mail-forum under <http://www.grundeinkommen.de/>.
The next meeting of the "Netzwerk Grundeinkommen" will take place in December 2004 in Berlin.
A first congress is being planned for 2005.
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5. RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

DE WISPELAERE, Jurgen and STIRTON, Lindsay. "The Many Faces of Universal Basic Income",
The Political Quarterly 75 (3), July-September 2004, 266-274.
As the debate on unconditional basic income, basic capital and cognate schemes matures, it has become necessary to rethink the idea of universalism in welfare policy. In this paper De Wispelaere (Lecturer in Equality Studies, University College Dublin) and Stirton (Lecturer in Law, University of East Anglia) argue that research should move beyond discussion of principles or ideal-type policy schemes, and get onto the details of concrete policy design and implementation. For the neglect of implementation issues risks impeding the political and administrative feasibility of universal basic income. To illustrate, the paper outlines seven dimensions along which concrete proposals vary, and suggests ways in which decisions on each dimension will determine the shape as well as the effects of the policy in practice.

FITZPATRICK, Tony and CAHILL, Michael eds. *Environment and Welfare: Towards a Green Social Policy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, xii+226p., ISBN 0 333 91984 X, £45. First editor's address: Tony.Fitzpatrick@nottingham.ac.uk
Is there a specifically green approach to the welfare state? Most contributors to this volume believe that there is, and some argue that an unconditional basic income is a central part of it. One of them is the co-editor Tony Fitzpatrick (author of *Freedom and Security. An Introduction to the Basic Income Debate*, 1999), who devotes a whole chapter to a discussion of putative green pros and cons of basic income. Another is James Robertson (author of *The New Economics of Sustainable Development*, 1999), who argues for an ecotax-funded basic income.

HANDLER, Joel F. *Social Citizenship and Workfare in the United States and Western Europe. The Paradox of Inclusion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Studies in Law and Society), 2004, 317p. Author's address: <HANDLER@mail.law.ucla.edu>. Publisher's website: <http://www.cambridge.org>
This essay by Joel F. Handler, professor at the UCLA Law School (Los Angeles) and life member of BIEN, compares workfare policies in the United States and "active labor policies" in Western Europe. Significant similarities appear between all programmes, especially in so far as most field-level practices serve to exclude those who are the least employable or lack qualifications that agencies favour. Among the alternatives to such schemes, Handler focuses on a basic income guarantee. "A basic income", he writes in his concluding chapter, "would bring in the socially excluded, it would restore the status of social citizenship".

STANDING, Guy (ed.), *Promoting Income Security as a Right: Europe and North America*, London: Anthem Press (75-76 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8HA, UK, sales@wpcpress.com),

paperback, 601pp., ISBN: 1 84331 151 8 Price: £24.95. Editor's address:

<GuyStanding@compuserve.com>. Publisher's website: <http://www.anthempress.com/>

This massive volume consists in a broad selection of the papers presented during BIEN's ninth international congress (Geneva, 2002). Never before had such a large number of contributions to a BIEN congress been published together. With no less than 34 chapters, the book offers an comprehensive picture of the many topics discussed at both the plenary and parallel sessions as they relate to the more developed countries. Starting with a detailed introductory chapter by Guy Standing, director of the ILO's Programme on Socio-Economic Security and master-mind of the congress, it argues that there should be a guaranteed basic income as a citizenship right, paid to each individual, regardless of marital status, work status, age or sex. Some chapters argue that existing selective schemes for income protection are ineffectual, costly and misleading; other chapters present alternative rationales and philosophical justifications for moving towards a new form of universalism based on citizenship economic rights. The chapters are organised into five sections: "Basic Income as a Right" (with contributions by Anthony Atkinson, Raymond Plant, Claus Offe, Roswitha Pioch and Ron Dore, "Rationales for Basic Income" (with contributions by Rosamund Stock, Sibyl Schwarzenbach, Michael Howard, Michael Krätke, Torsten Meireis, Alan Dyer and Jørn Loftager, "Legitimizing Basic Income Politically" (with contributions by Steven Shafarman, Stefan Liebig and Steffen Mau, Daniel Raventós and David Casassas, Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, José Noguera and Daniel Raventós, Jan Otto Andersson and Olli Kangas, Nanna Kildal and Stein Kuhnle, Sabine Stadler, Andrea Fumagalli, Pascale Vielle and Pierre Walthery, "Building Towards Basic Income" (with contributions by Theresa Funciello, Michael Opielka, Erik Christensen, Christine le Clairche, Gianluca Busilacchi, and "National and Regional Initiatives" (with contributions by Luis Sanzo-González, Claude Gamel, Didier Balsan and Josiane Vero, Karl Widerquist, Simon Wigley, Scott Goldsmith, Joel Handler). The chapter by Scott Goldsmith, in the final section, gives an informative account of the only existing basic income scheme on earth, the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. But the whole volume gives a lively picture of the current state of discussion in many "Northern" countries, from the angle of several disciplines. It will be officially launched in Barcelona on the occasion of BIEN's tenth congress.

VAN DER LINDEN, Bruno. "Active citizen's income, unconditional income and participation under imperfect competition : A welfare analysis ", Oxford Economic Papers 56, 2004, 98-117.

Author's address: vanderlinden@ires.ucl.ac.be.

Various types of (conditional and unconditional) basic income schemes are claimed to alleviate the allocative inefficiencies induced by unemployment insurance systems. This paper by Louvain labour economist Bruno Van der Linden develops a dynamic general equilibrium model of a unionised economy where participation in the labour market is endogenous and the budget of the State has to balance. It is shown that basic income schemes do reduce the equilibrium rate of unemployment. But the normative analysis suggests that only the active population, i.e. the workers and the involuntary unemployed, should be eligible to the basic income. Relative to the present situation, introducing a conditional basic income in this sense (an "active citizen's income") can be a Pareto-improving reform, i.e. a reform that leaves everyone at least as well off as before and at least one person better off.

(Author's address: IRES, 3 Place Montesquieu, B-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, e-mail: vanderlinden@ires.ucl.ac.be.)

GERMAN

OPIELKA, Michael. "Grundeinkommensversicherung. Schweizer Erfahrungen, deutsche Perspektiven?", in *Sozialer Fortschritt* 5 (53), 2004, 114-126. (Also shortened as "Diesseits von Bismarck", in *Berliner Republik*2, 2004, 16-28, and revised as "Bürgerversicherung strong. Die Vision einer Grundeinkommensversicherung für Erwachsene und Kinder und einer sozialen Gesundheitsprämie", in Hebel, Stephan & Kessler, Wolfgang eds., *Zukunft sozial: Wegweise zu mehr Gerechtigkeit*, Frankfurt: Publik Forum/Frankfurter Rundschau 2004, 150-173.) Author's address: "Michael Opielka" <michael.opielka@isoe.org>.

In this paper, Michael Opielka, professor of social policy at the professor for social policy at Jena's University of Applied Sciences, discusses the idea of a Basic Income Insurance (BII) that would integrate all monetary transfers within the German welfare state. The idea is inspired by the Swiss pension system AHV but broadens its scope to cover both the whole life cycle and all income risks (old age, invalidity, joblessness, parental leave, childhood, illness, education, basic needs). The BII would be financed by contributions from all types of income without upper limit. The burden on waged labour would thereby be reduced and the public budgets become less strained. One aspect of the proposal is the introduction of a partial basic income for those people who are fit for work but do not want to be available for jobs provided through the "Bundesagentur für Arbeit", the Federal Agency for the labour market. Opielka, proposes a "Bafög for all" which would universalise Germany's current system of student grants by extending them to all citizens. 50% of this partial basic income would be given as a loan to be paid back, and the other 50% as an unconditional benefit.

OPIELKA, Michael (ed.), *Grundrente in Deutschland. Sozialpolitische Analysen*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004.

This is the first book to give a comprehensive overview of the lively debate about basic pensions as a basic income for the elderly. It contains historical and analytical accounts about the German debate (Opielka, Schmähl), and the successful Dutch (Roebroek & Nelissen), Swedish (Hort), and Swiss (Wechsler) developments. Further, it presents comparative perspectives on different basic pension models (Opielka, Strengmann-Kuhn) and two specific proposals for Germany: the tax-financed basic pension proposed in the 1980s by the Greens in the German federal parliament and discussed at length by Ellen Kirner; and the Basic Income Insurance ("Grundeinkommensversicherung") whose scope is broader than the elderly, but whose benefits would accrue largely to the latter, as explained in his contribution by Michael Opielka. The final chapter by Bernd Schulte discusses basic pension schemes as a contribution to the harmonization of European social law.

SPANISH

DOMENECH, Antoni. Entrevista con Carlos Abel Suárez, in *El Periodista de Chile* (Santiago) 1653, 2004. Downloadable at <http://www.elperiodista.cl/newtenberg/1653/article-62664.html>. Author's address: domenech@eco.ub.es.

At the end of this in-depth interview conducted on the occasion of the publication of his magisterial "republican revision of the socialist tradition" (*El eclipse de la fraternidad*, Crítica, 2004), the respected Catalan/Spanish political philosopher Antoni Domènech expresses his firm support for basic income: "the struggle for a Basic Income is perfectly compatible with the necessary present struggle in defence of the core of the indisputable moral and material achievements (the universality and unconditionality of health services and public education, etc.) that came with the advent of the "social State" for most members of the working class, so that this can help to preserve and even to stimulate once again, as a project of a renovated left, the soundest and more lucid part of the Fordist-type working population and its debilitated union organisations. Maybe Basic Income does not offer much more than this (it is not, of course, a panacea for the radical transformation of the planetary mode of production and consumption) and nor do I believe that its leftwing proponents like Daniel Raventós in Spain, Philippe van Parijs in Belgium and Rubén Lo Vuolo in Argentina, would suggest that it does. Yet, in the present circumstances, it is a lot. In any case, it is sufficiently worthwhile in itself."

DOMENECH, Antoni and RAVENTOS, Daniel. "La Renta Básica de Ciudadanía y las poblaciones trabajadoras del primer mundo", in *Le Monde Diplomatique* (ed. española) 105, 2004. Available online at <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/index.php>. Second author's address: "Daniel Raventos" <ravento@eco.ub.es>

This article co-authored by Antoni Domènech, Professor Philosophy at the University of Barcelona and author of *El eclipse de la fraternidad* (2004) and Daniel Raventós, lecturer in sociology at the University of Barcelona and author of *El derecho a la existencia* (1999) contains

a strong plea for basic income: "A minimally generous BI, would plausibly tend to reverse the pattern of capitulation in the post-war worker's movement with regard to freedom and democracy in the workplace, and would potentially open up a new social space, this time no longer to defend the threatened constitutionalisation of the capitalist enterprise but to embark upon an all-out democratising offensive in the ethical-political republican tradition of the best North American ("citizens in the workplace") and European ("economic democracy") trade union practice."

LINDE, Luis M. "Renta básica, justicia cósmica", in Revista de Libros 91-92, julio-agosto 2004. Journal's address: <http://www.revistadelibros.com/Editions/LastNumber.asp>
In the form of a review article discussing Philippe Van Parijs's *Real Freedom for All* and *What's Wrong with a Free Lunch?*, Robert van der Veen and Loek Groot's *Basic Income on the Agenda* and Daniel Raventos's *La Renta Básica*, this is a fierce critique of basic income by Bank of Spain economist Luis Linde.

6. ABOUT BIEN

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BIEN'S LIFE MEMBERS

Link to <http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/BIEN/Join.htm> to find out how to become a Life Member of BIEN. Essentially, it amounts to send EUR 100 to BIEN's account 001 2204356 10 at FORTIS BANK (IBAN: BE41 0012 2043 5610), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussel, Belgium

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