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1. EDITORIAL

At its Cape Town meeting on November 1, 2006, BIEN's Executive Committee decided to give financial help to the new journal Basic Income Studies, in order to support its efforts in stimulating a high-quality discussion of basic income. The EC is therefore pleased to announce that the second issue of BIS has just been released. It includes many excellent papers that will no doubt contribute to fostering "informed discussion on this topic throughout the world", which is, incidentally, one of BIEN's primary objectives.

The Executive Committee

2. BASIC INCOME STUDIES: VOL. 1, Issue 2

Basic Income Studies is pleased to announce the publication of BIS Vol. 1, Issue 2 (December 2006). This issue features a debate, guest-edited by Loek Groot, on the merits and disadvantage of using an experimental approach in basic income research. To view any of the articles in question, simply click on the links below.

Please note BIS first issue with contributions by Philippe Van Parijs, Robert van der Veen, Erik Olin Wright, Joel Handler and many others is still available freely at http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss1.

Contents of Vol.1, Issue 2:
EDITORIAL:
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art2
RESEARCH ARTICLES:
Stuart White, "Reconsidering the Exploitation Objection to Basic Income".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art4
Simon Wigley, "Basic Income and the Problem of Cumulative Misfortune".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art5
Philip L. Harvey, "The Relative Cost of a Universal Basic Income and a Negative Income Tax".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art6

RESEARCH NOTE:
Guido Erreygers and John Cunliffe, "Basic Income in 1848".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art7

DEBATE: “Toward a Basic Income Experiment”?
Guest-editor: Loek Groot
Loek Groot, "Reasons for Launching a Basic Income Experiment".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art8
Karl Widerquist, "The Bottom Line in a Basic Income Experiment".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art9

Hans Peeters and Axel Marx, "Lottery Games as a Tool for Empirical Basic Income Research".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art10
José A. Noguera and Jurgen De Wispelaere, "A Plea for the Use of Laboratory Experiments in Basic Income Research".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art11
Ilkka Virjo, "A Piece of the Puzzle: A Comment on the Basic Income Experiment Debate".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art12

BOOK REVIEWS:
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art13
Laura Bambrick, "Review of Clive Lord, A Citizens' Income: A Foundation for a Sustainable World".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art14
José A. Noguera, "Review of Russell Muirhead, Just Work".
http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol1/iss2/art15

The editors want to encourage authors to submit their manuscripts to BIS for consideration. To submit your next paper to Basic Income Studies, visit http://www.bepress.com/bis, and click "Submit Article". If you have any questions or would like to discuss your contribution informally, contact Jurgen De Wispelaere or Karl Widerquist at bis-editors@bepress.com.
BIS is published by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress), sponsored by Red Renta Básica (RRB) and BIEN, and supported by USBIG.

3. EVENTS

*NEW YORK CITY (US), 23-25 February 2007: Sixth Annual USBIG Congress

The USBIG Network will hold its Sixth Annual Congress in conjunction with the Eastern Economics Association Meeting, February 23-25, 2007, at the Crowne Plaza Times Square Manhattan Hotel in New York City. Speakers include Dalton Conley, Stanley Aronowitz, Eduardo Suplicy, and William DiFazio. Dalton Conley is the director of the Center for Advanced Social Science Research and professor of sociology and public policy at New York University, and he is the author of Honky, Being Black, Living in the Red, and the Starting Gate. Stanley Aronowitz is a Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the City University of New York and author or editor of twenty three books including, Just Around Corner, How Class Works, The Last Good Job in America, and The Jobless Future. Eduardo Suplicy is a member of the Brazilian Senate and author of From the Distribution of Income to the Rights of Citizenship. William DiFazio is a professor of Sociology and St. John’s University in Queens, New York and author of several books including Ordinary Poverty.
For further information: www.usbig.net
*NEW YORK CITY (US), 6-8 May 2007: The basic income guarantee in international perspective*

Within the framework of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University (New York City), Richard Caputo organizes a session on “The basic income guarantee in international perspective”. The Conference is scheduled for 6-8 May 2007 at the Sheraton New York. Interested persons should contact Richard Caputo at caputo@yu.edu


This conference is organized by Prof. Jim Mulvale at the Department of Justice Studies of the University of Regina. Themes and topics submitted to discussion will include: re-establishing a strong social safety net, re-committing to the principle of universality in income support, health care, and access to education, ensuring a living wage for working people, moving toward a guaranteed annual income or "basic income" in Saskatchewan and Canada. For further information: jim.mulvale@uregina.ca

*MANCHESTER (UK), 3-5 September 2007: Workshop on 'Ethics, Work and Emancipation'*

A workshop on 'Ethics, Work and Emancipation' is planned as part of the 'Workshops in Political Theory' Fourth Annual Conference that will be held at Manchester Metropolitan University, 3-5 September 2007.

The goal of this specific workshop is to explore the possibility of, and the difficulties associated with realizing, emancipatory or meaningful forms of work in contemporary capitalist societies. Papers are welcomed from researchers working in the disciplines of political, social, and economic philosophy/theory.

Key themes and areas of focus include:
* Basic income and work: What is the relation between meaningful work and the basic income literature? Is the call for a basic citizen income at odds with, indifferent to, or, instead, a support to the demand for meaningful modes of human productivity?
* The concept of emancipatory/meaningful work
* The historical genesis of the concept of work
* The ethics and morality of meaningful work
* The politics of meaningful work
* Work and the economy

Organizers: Keith Breen (Queen's University Belfast), Ruth Chenoweth (Royal Holloway College). If you are interested in presenting a paper in this workshop, please contact Keith Breen (k.breen@qub.ac.uk).
For further information, see www.hlss.mmu.ac.uk/pap/events/wpt

* BARCELONA (ES), 22-23 November 2007: 7th Symposium of Red Rentà Bàsica and Third Seminar of Emerging Human Rights*

Convenors: Red Rentà Bàsica (RRB-XRB) & Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya (IDHC)
Apart from opening and closing plenary sessions (definitive programme will be published in due course), the Symposium will include 8 panels on the following issues:
1) Human Rights and Basic Income
2) Women and Basic Income
3) Labour Market, Right to Work, and Basic Income
4) Basic Income: Financial and Economic Issues
5) Rights of Immigrants and Basic Income
6) Normative Justifications of Basic Income
7) Basic Income and Social and Political Actors
8) Right to Basic Assets Security (water, food and energy) and Basic Income

Languages of the Symposium: Spanish and Catalan

Deadline for abstract proposals: 1st May 2007

Abstract proposals (max. 300 words) should include name, institution, email address, date of birth, and panel in which the author wishes to participate. Abstract proposals should be sent to the members of the Congress Scientific Committee:

David Casassas, University of Oxford, RRB-XRB: dcasassas@ub.edu
Águeda Mera, IDHC: comunicacio@idhc.org
Daniel Raventós, Universitat de Barcelona, RRB-XRB: danielraventos@ub.edu
José Luis Rey, Universidad P. Comillas, RRB-XRB: jlrey@der.upco.es
Jaume Saura, Universitat de Barcelona, IDHC: jsaura@ub.edu

For further information: http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/textos/index.php?x=564

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

*CHINA*: EDUARDO SUPLYC OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BASIC INCOME IN CHINA

On February 2nd, 2007, the Editors of BIEN NewsFlash received a letter from co-chair of BIEN, Senator Eduardo Sulpicy, with a detailed account of his visit in China (January 2007). Excerpts of this account, which was entitled "One World, One Dream: An Optimistic Perspective for a Basic Dream for All 1.3 Billion or More Chinese in 2020", are published below.

"My first visit to China was in 1976. For 19 days, I was among a group of the first three journalists that were officially invited to visit six cities, six factories, two agricultural communes, the University of Beijing and other organizations after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Brazil and China. It was during the last days of the Cultural Revolution and six months before the death of Mao Tse Tung. In so many places I saw the posters, dazibaos and many people expressing critics against the revisionist wind of Deng Xiaoping. At a certain point, I asked my interpreter and guide, Chen Duquing: why is there such a campaign against him since we don’t see anyone talking in his favour? Two years later, Deng Xiaoping became the main head of State in China. That interpreter became a good friend of mine and, today, he is the Chinese Ambassador to Brazil. As such, he insisted with me that he would like me to visit China again.

So, from the 17th to the 27th of January I visited Beijing, Shangai and Xian, with the main purpose to know how the Chinese are having such a high rate of growth of their GDP, how they are advancing in the purpose of eradicating poverty and building a just society. This time I had the opportunity of having dialogues with prominent officials, including (among others) the vice-director of Financial and Economic Commission of the Popular National Assembly, Yi Xun Yan, with the vice- minister of the International Department of the Central
Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Chen Fengxiang, with the General Director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, Wu Zhong, and last but not least, at the recommendation of Co-Chair of BIEN Guy Standing, with Professor Tian Xiaobao, President of China Academy of Labor and Social Security, and his fellow directors, Genghua Liu and Liu Junsheng. Prof Tian Xiaobao is considered to be the first economist in China, author of a 2006 book on Social Security in China, part of the Basic Series of China, published by the China Intercontinental Press.

I was able to observe the tremendous transformation of the Chinese economy since my last visit in 1976. At that time I was quite impressed by numerous advancements that they had achieved in terms of eradicating absolute poverty with respect to what had happened before. But now the rate of progress is much more visible in almost all places, especially when we see the continuous construction of modern buildings, both for residential and for other purposes in the main cities, the preparation, for example, for the Olympic Games of 2008, with the construction of numerous stadiums and gymnasiums, the diversity of clothes that people in the streets are using in comparison to thirty years ago, the number of electronic devices being used by the people everywhere, the investment in roads and energy mills, modern trains, and infrastructure and so on.

I could perceive that the reforms instituted since 1978 have tried to stimulate all kinds of economic initiatives both in the rural as well as in the urban area. People were able to organize firms to produce goods and services and try to sell them and to enrich themselves. In rural areas, for example, the families are being stimulated to improve their houses to accommodate tourists from the urban areas who would like to see how life is among those who live from agriculture. They receive people for two or three days paying daily rates from 50 to 80 Yuans with the right to three meals a day. Foreign investment was highly stimulated. At the same time the government continued to have a strong presence in the economy, mainly in the areas of electric energy, oil, petrochemical, telecommunications, coal, naval and aviation industries. The government continues to be very important in planning how the government sector interacts with the private sector.

The Chinese Communist Party is still in control of the Chinese society with a gradual opening of the democratic process, with the people participating more and more in the decisions at local levels but not as much as we are accustomed in the democratic nations of the world. The modern means of communications, especially the Internet, will probably have an important effect in opening the Chinese society. It is predicted that in two years there will be more Internet users in China than in the USA.

In all of those meetings, I first listened about the organization of the Chinese economy and social programs, how they have been able to attain the highest rates of growth in the world for many years, with a more than 9% average per year since the nineties, and a 10.7% growth of the GDP in 2006. Those authorities explained to me how the Chinese were able to diminish the number of people living in conditions of extreme poverty in rural areas from 250 million in 1978 to less than 30 million recently. They explained how the social security system was having a development, the unemployment insurance and a system of minimum subsistence to the urban population that was benefitting around 30 million inhabitants. Under this system, for example in Beijing and Shangai, a family with a per capita income below 390 Yuans per month has the right to receive a complement of income equal to what is missing to get to that amount. This is still not a national law, but a system that is administered by decrees at each regional level. In the same way as the minimum wage varies from region to region, also the minimum subsistence level varies according to their respective regional conditions. Then I explained about the developments of the social programs that exist today in Brazil such as the Bolsa Família Program and the perspective of gradually introducing the Unconditional Citizen's Basic Income for all the Brazilians who will be 190 million in 2010.
It was with Professor Tian Xiaobao that I had my longest and very productive three hour conversation. After explaining all the advantages of an unconditional basic income to him, after describing experience of the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend System and the perspective of having such a system in Brazil, I asked him whether he considered possible to think about having the institution of an unconditional basic income for all 1 billion and 300 million or more Chinese in the future. Professor Tain Xiaobao answered that he considered the Basic Income a very sound and rational proposal, making sense and being consistent with the objective of building a harmonious society, such as advocated by Confucius 520 years before Christ. It is also consistent with the objectives of today’s Chinese government. He told me, however, that to attain the objective of paying a basic income to all Chinese, it would be required a time of preparation for the next three quinquenial plans. Thus, a Basic Income would be desirable and possible in 2020.

That made me very happy. He said that he would like to invite me to return to China to give a lecture on the Basic Income for the whole Academy of Social Security and Labor. I said that I would be glad to accept the invitation. But I firmly suggested that he should invite Professors Philippe Van Parijs, Guy Standing and other members of BIEN for the same purpose. More than that, as the Co-Chair of BIEN I invited him to come to the next International Congress of BIEN to be held in Dublin, Ireland, in 2008, although I had to have the approval for this initiative by the other members of the Executive Board of BIEN. We might think of preparing an International Congress of BIEN in 2020 in Beijing. Then we will be closer to the Olympic Games of 2008 objective: One World, One Dream."

Senator Eduardo Matarazzo Suplicy

*GERMANY: GOTZ WERNER ADVOCATES BASIC INCOME AGAIN

In an interview with the daily die Tageszeitung, which was published on November 27, 2006, German businessman Gotz Werner argues again in favour of a so-called "Grundeinkommen" (basic income). Here are a few significant excerpts:

Journalist: You speak very positively. You own over 1700 drug stores. You have annual sales of 3.7 billion Euros. You are one of the 500 richest Germans.
Werner: That is untrue. Like almost all entrepreneurs, I wanted more and more in the past. Today maximizing meaning is my top priority.
Journalist: Do you see the world with different eyes?
Werner: I have read the classics, Goethe, Schiller. I understand my own success is not everything. I want to help others succeed. People are central, not business. I try to imagine a positive world.
Journalist: “Nothing is stronger than an idea whose time has come,” you say.
Werner: Victor Hugo said that. I only quoted him.
Journalist: Is the time right for your idea?
Werner: At least the idea could be discussed at last. Two years ago that was something for a few experts. The halls are full when I give lectures today.
Journalist: What has changed?
Werner: The old political slogans have nothing to do with the world where people live. Unemployment grows despite temporary announcements of success. Unbridled growth damages our resources. If Angela Merkel would say “full employment” is possible, nobody would believe her any more…
Journalist: The unconditional basic income already has supporters in the parties – from left to right. Why is this?
Werner: Because this is the most radical form of socialism and the most radical form of
capitalism. After one of my addresses, a listener wrote to me: “Your basic income model has reconciled my socialist heart with my neoliberal mind.”

Read the full interview in German at http://www.taz.de/p/t/2006/112/7/a0146.1/textdruck
An English translation is available at http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/12/14/18337615.php

*SOUTH AFRICA: TRADE UNIONS CALL FOR BASIC INCOME*

The largest trade union federation in South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), says it hopes that a basic income grant will be adopted at the African National Congress (ANC) policy conference in June 2007. In its end-of-year statement, spokesperson Patrick Craven said: "We closed the year encouraged by Social Development Minister Zola Skweyiya's support for a reform [the basic income grant] that Cosatu has been campaigning for over many years."
For further information: http://www.mg.co.za/

5. PUBLICATIONS

*ENGLISH*


In the 1790s the radical thinkers Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence were among the first to advocate the payment of a basic income as a right to all citizens. In this paper J.E. King (La Trobe University, Australia) and John Marangos (Colorado State University, United States) outline Paine's position, as set out in The Rights of Man (1791-1792) and in Agrarian Justice (1795), and compare it with the case made by Thomas Spence in The Rights of Infants (1797). The authors show that their arguments were surprisingly complex, and included utilitarian grounds for supporting a basic income in addition to an assertion of the individual's right to existence and to a share in the produce of nature.


In this essay, Cosma Orsi (Roskilde University, Denmark) argues that one of the most urgent challenges of our times is the need to "repair the social fracture" generated by the free market. Basic income is discussed (pp.106-111) as one of the elements of a package of measures that might contribute to reach this goal.

*FRENCH*

Special issue of ECOREV’ Revue Critique d'écologie politique on the topic "Intermittents, jeunes, précarité, banlieue... le revenu social garanti en ligne de mire", issue 23 (Summer 2006).

The full content of this special issue of the Green magazine ECOREV’ (see NewsFlash 40) is now available online. It focuses on the working poor and the problematic situation of French
poor suburbs. Several authors show how the introduction of a "guaranteed social income" could contribute to settle these problems.
Website: http://ecorev.org


This essay by Michel Herland (Université des Antilles-Guyane, France) provides its reader with a panorama of the history of political philosophy, from Plato to Rawls and Nozick. Chapter 8 is devoted to a presentation and discussion of Van Parijs' defense of real freedom and basic income. But the author remains skeptical, and stresses that there should not be anything like a an income by right without a related duty to contribute.

*ITALIAN


This DVD, promoted by the Councillor's Office for Labour in the region of Lazio (Italy), focuses on different patterns of social security in Belgium and the Netherlands. It is the digital complement of a book on "Reddito Garantito e nuovi diritti sociali", which has been published in February 2006 (see NewsFlash 38, March 2006). Both publications are intended to foster the Italian debate on a guaranteed income, by contrasting the Italian case with more developed welfare systems. The DVD features interviews with social benefits recipients, activists, political actors and scholars. The idea of basic income is briefly discussed in interviews with Loek Groot, Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght.

For further information, please contact sgobetti@regione.lazio.it
Online information about the DVD at http://www.regione.lazio.it/web2/contents/lavoro_giovani/


An interview with Philippe Van Parijs on the occasion of the publication of "Il reddito minimo universale", the Italian translation of Van Parijs & Vanderborght's introductory book on basic income. The connection with Marx and the issue of the "active welfare state" are among the topics discussed in this interview. This issue also includes a review of the book by Andrea Fumagalli (University of Pavia).

6. NEW LINKS

*BASIC INCOME IN LUXEMBURG
An informative website (in German) on basic income in Luxemburg:
http://www.mtk.lu/bedingungslosesgundekommen.html (in german)
* OIL FUNDS AND REDISTRIBUTION
A paper on oil funds, mentioning the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend: LEGUM, Margaret (2006), "Nature's bounty is an asset for all, forever".
Posted on December 5, 2006 at http://www.busrep.co.za/index.php?fArticleId=3576329

7. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

Co-chair:
Eduardo SUPILICY, Federal Senator, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Guy STANDING, Professor of Economic Security, University of Bath, and Professor of Labour Economics, Monash University

Further details about BIEN's Executive Committee and International Board can be found on our website, as well as further details about the Recognised National Networks.

MEMBERSHIP

All life members of the Basic Income European Network, many of whom were non-Europeans, have automatically become life members of the Basic Income Earth Network. To join them, just send your name and address (postal and electronic) to David Casassas <dcasassas@ub.edu> Secretary of BIEN, and transfer EUR 100 to BIEN's account 001 2204356 10 at FORTIS BANK (IBAN: BE41 0012 2043 5610), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium. An acknowledgement will be sent upon receipt. BIEN Life-members can become “B(I)ENEFACORS” by giving another 100 Euros or more to the Network. The funds collected will facilitate the participation of promising BI advocates coming from developing countries or from disadvantaged groups.

B(I)ENEFACORS:
Joel Handler (US), Philippe Van Parijs (BE), Helmut Pelzer (DE), Guy Standing (UK), Eduardo Supilicy (BR), Robert van der Veen (NL), Richard Caputo (US)

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Requests for free subscription are to be sent to bien@basicincome.org
Items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes are to be sent to Yannick Vanderborgh, newsletter editor, UCL, Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, vanderborgh@fusl.ac.be

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