



BIEN - Basic Income Earth Network NEWSFLASH 48 November 2007

www.basicincome.org

The Basic Income Earth Network was founded in 1986 as the Basic Income European Network. It expanded its scope from Europe to the Earth in 2004. It serves as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income, and fosters informed discussion on this topic throughout the world.

The present NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of Paul Nollen, Markus Blümel, David Casassas, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Phil Dines, Sandra González, Seàn Healy, Dirk Jacobi, Sascha Liebermann, Jean-Christophe Merle, Rob Rainer, Corina Rodríguez Enríquez, Philippe Van Parijs, Karl Widerquist, and Pablo Yanes.

This NewsFlash can be downloaded as a PDF document on our website www.basicincome.org

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1. 12th BIEN CONGRESS, June 2008, Dublin (Ireland)

The 12th International Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) will be held on 20-21 June 2008 in Dublin, Ireland. The theme of this World Congress is: **Inequality and Development in a Globalised Economy - The Basic Income Option**. This two-day event involving participants from all the continents of the world will be preceded by a one-day event (June 19, 2008) which will focus on Basic Income in Ireland and will be open to all participants in the World Congress.

This Congress will combine plenary sessions featuring invited speakers and parallel workshops with volunteered papers. Major themes to be addressed include:

- Why Basic Income provides a key part of the answer to the challenges posed on issues such as inequality and development in the emerging globalised world.
- How a Basic Income system can be operationalised and achieved - politically, institutionally and technically.
- The way forward if Basic Income approaches and systems are to become a reality in the foreseeable future.

There will be capacity for a large number of parallel sessions featuring papers on a wide range of topics. A call for papers has been issued and already proposals have been received. Details of the call for papers and of the Congress can be accessed at the dedicated website established for the Congress: www.basicincomeireland.com

The organising committee can be contacted at info@basicincomeireland.com

2. EVENTS

Reports on past events:

* **BASEL (CH)**, 5-7 October 2007: 2nd German-speaking Basic Income-congress

More than 300 participants from Germany, Switzerland and Austria attended the second German-speaking BI congress "Securing everybody's existence and Unconditional – BI as a human right" which was held at the University of Basel, Switzerland, Oct. 5-7, 2007. "This congress has linked the debates on BI in our three countries and stressed the European dimension of this debate" said Avji Sirmoglu, member of the organizing committee. "Combating poverty is one important issue in the debate on BI, since the aim of a BI is social integration and participation in the society". Scientists and persons e.g. from social initiatives and organizations of unemployed shared their insights and visions regarding current developments such as social security, labor markets as well as unpaid work. They discussed the introduction of an unconditional BI which must be high enough to secure everybody's existence as well as special aspects like how to finance a BI.

One central question was whether BI is a human right. There was common sense that every human being must receive his/her fair stake of the existing wealth. BI was called a very good way to make this reality. There was harsh criticism towards so-called "Bürgergeld-Modelle" - unconditional, yet neo-liberal grants that do not guarantee everyone's security rather serve to weaken the welfare state. These models do not correspond to the criteria of a

BI which are: securing everybody's existence, individual, unconditional, universal. There was consensus that the predominant social system which heavily stresses discipline and tends to impoverish people is heading in the wrong direction. Therefore new ways to guarantee social security and real freedom for all are necessary. Many of the persons organizing the congress argued that a basic income grant definitely is a human right.

This second German-speaking BI-congress was organized by the BI-networks of Austria, Germany and Switzerland together with ATTAC Germany and Switzerland and the BI-group within ATTAC Austria. The congress was held in participation with the Institute of Sociology (University of Basel), Initiative BI Basel and others. Please find the program and articles on the congress (in German): www.grundeinkommen2007.org Some of the workshops were recorded. Audio CDs (all German) can be ordered: www.grundeinkommen.at

***OXFORD (UK), 10 October 2007: "Will the Right Basic Income Please Stand Up?"**

On Wednesday 10 October, the Foundation for Law, Justice and Society (FLJS), in association with the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford University, hosted a Keynote Address by Amitai Etzioni on guaranteed basic income (GBI). The lecture opened the Foundation's two-day conference on 'The Contract for Income Support and Pension in the Modern Welfare State', attended by an international panel of government officials, policymakers, academics, economists, and political scientists.

Professor Etzioni, a former Senior Advisor to the White House and President of the American Sociological Association, speaking to an audience at Rhodes House, Oxford, argued that everyone should be entitled to a guaranteed basic income 'as a reflection of our basic humanity'. From his standpoint as founder of the Communitarian Network, he outlined his proposal for a GBI that is not means tested and not contingent on people's ability to work. Etzioni argued that we are not complete human beings when deprived of lasting, meaningful human relationships, and that we have basic obligations toward one another that GBI can help to engender. A basic income, he went on to say, would allow for a stakeholder society that would mitigate the dependence of the disempowered and foster a stakeholder society of mutual respect.

John Adams, FLJS Chairman, opened the conference the following day as part of the Foundation's programme on the Social Contract, which aims to examine the reciprocal rights and obligations between the citizens and the state in modern liberal society. The first speaker, Professor Peter Edelman, drawing on his experience as a servant in all three branches of US government, challenged the idea that welfare causes dependency, and called for an expanded conception of the social contract from a commitment to end poverty to a determination to achieve a living income for everyone. Dalmer Hoskins, the newly appointed Chief Officer for Strategic Planning of the US Social Security Administration, corroborated this perspective of American welfare, attacking the 'myth' of the US pension policy and the US healthcare system that is 'spinning out of control'.

Various alternatives were explored, including the Swedish model for merging welfare with the social contract to produce a system of income support which verges on a basic income, albeit one that is slightly means tested. Avia Spivak, former deputy governor of the Bank of Israel, examined the increased economic risks caused by ageing populations through case studies of Sweden and Chile, and Jef van Langendonck proposed a global welfare fund to which governments would contribute, enforced by international trade agreements.

Professors Lucy Williams and Charles Mills offered feminist and racial critiques of the precepts underlying social contract theory, arguing that it obscures the roots of poverty by

'naturalising' it, thereby ignoring the imbalance of assets and opportunity inherent in most societies. The conference was concluded with an assessment of the feasibility of GBI by the sociologist Michael Opielka, and Professor Charles Murray's proposal for GBI as a replacement for the welfare state.

For further information: Phil Dines, Phil.Dines@fljs.org, Publications and Communications Manager, **The Foundation for Law, Justice and Society**, Wolfson College, Linton Road
Oxford OX2 6UD, <http://www.fljs.org>

* **OXFORD (UK)**, 26-27 October 2007, Conference: Towards a 'Basic Income Society'?

On 26 and 27 October, the Centre for the Study of Social Justice at Oxford University (with support from the Department of Politics and International Relations and the Public Policy Unit at Oxford as well as the Association for Legal and Social Philosophy) held a two-day conference on basic income. The conference brought together an audience of 15 invited speakers and 60 delegates to discuss a number of issues surrounding the idea of the basic income society. The organizers of this conference, David Casassas (University of Oxford), Jurgen De Wispelaere (Trinity College Dublin) and Stuart White (University of Oxford) explicitly wanted to question the notion of a basic income society, its likely form and limitations, and how pathways towards its achievement could be conceived. To this effect they invited a number of speakers who are sympathetic to both the strengths and limitations of basic income.

The first day of the conference comprised a roundtable debating the normative justification of basic income schemes from a republican perspective. Building on recent work in republican political theory, David Casassas (University of Oxford), Daniel Raventós (University of Barcelona), Carole Pateman (University of Cardiff/UCLA), Stuart White (University of Oxford) and Karl Widerquist (University of Reading) discussed various aspects of republican political thought and whether this perspective can offer a robust philosophical justification for the basic income society. Casassas and Raventós outlined a strong republican case for basic income, with Pateman, White and Widerquist introducing critical remarks. Most of the contributions of the roundtable will be published in a special debate section, guest-edited by David Casassas of *Basic Income Studies*, forthcoming December 2007.

The second day of the conference offered a set of panels discussing the normative justification and political feasibility of the basic income society. In his introductory lecture, Tony Fitzpatrick (University of Nottingham) offered an assessment of the current state of the basic income debate a decade after the publication of his book *Freedom and Security*. Fitzpatrick identified both theoretical and practical challenges that basic income advocates must engage with when advancing the debate.

The next panel offered two papers discussing the ideal of the basic income society. Bill Jordan (University of Plymouth) challenged the strong individualist focus of much of the basic income debate, suggesting that advocates and researchers instead should be more concerned with social value (and the ways in which it can be promoted) if basic income is to deliver on its promises in terms of emancipation and freedom. José Antonio Noguera (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) then questioned the very idea of a basic income *society*, arguing that basic income advocates should not overstate the role and importance of these policies in current welfare arrangements. In her invited commentary, Louise Haagh engaged with both papers offering an institutionalist account of basic income.

After lunch the conference moved from the ideal of the basic income society to examining some aspects of the political feasibility of basic income schemes, and how these insights might impact on the form of the proposed basic income society. The first contribution

by David Purdy (University of Manchester) posed the question whether basic income could be viable, taking into account the dynamics of basic income schemes once introduced. Purdy suggested this question must be assessed in a way that allows basic income proponents to engage with social institutions as well as existing social forces, but was adamant when properly analysed basic income will prove sufficiently viable. In the second contribution Jurgen De Wispelaere (Trinity College Dublin) suggested that a governance perspective might offer important insights on the design of basic income schemes. He focused much of his presentation on outlining a governance dilemma in which basic income designs trade-off effectiveness and political legitimacy, and which must be resolved before basic income can become a genuinely feasible policy. In his invited commentary, Yannick Vanderborght (Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, Brussels) offered some critical comments on both papers. The conference ended with a roundtable with the main participants of the second day, giving the audience another opportunity to engage with the speakers.

* **ZÜRICH (CH)**, 1-2 November 2007: Workshop “Work and Social Justice”

The labour market is one of the most important and most contested fields of political conflict and argument in our time. Public discussion of increasing wage inequalities and especially of excessive management pay are, notwithstanding their popularity, only a symptom of more fundamental changes going on in the labour market. The conditions and the very meaning of work rank high on the agenda of most western societies. Persistent mass unemployment coupled with an increasing number of working poor contribute to the perception that grave social injustices prevail and require public intervention. Controversial ideas like the proposal of an unconditional basic income or, alternatively, of a compulsory minimum wage are now taken seriously not only by a few philosophers but also by politicians and by the general public. If this is the end of work as we know it, as authors like Jeremy Rifkin maintain, how should we deal with these changes in order to prevent the rise of even more injustice and conflict in our society? Is political philosophy prepared to answer these questions? Has economic theory succeeded in conceptualizing labour in a way which is appropriate to understand and manage these changes? This workshop tackled these and related questions from the perspectives of political philosophy and political economy.

Participants included Oren Levin-Waldman (New York), Jeffrey Moriarty (Bowling Green), John O’Neill (Manchester) and David A. Spencer (Leeds), Robert van der Veen (Amsterdam), Carsten Köllmann (Zurich), Anton Leist (Zurich).

For further information: Dr. Carsten Köllmann, URPP Ethics, Zollikerstrasse 117, CH-8008 Zürich, koellmann@ethik.uzh.ch, phone ++41 44 634 85 34

* **VIENNE (AT)**, 20 November 2007: Press conference of the “Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt, BIEN Austria”

In response to the plans of the government towards a more restrictive unemployment law – Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz (January 1, 2008) - and the introduction of a new means-tested welfare-scheme – Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung - by the year 2009 the Austrian Network declared its position. Margit Appel, Dietmar Koehler und Karl Reitter criticized especially the strong linkage between employment and social security. They argued that the concept ignores the increasing number of new forms of jobs (e.g. atypical work, working poor, jobs with no or little social coverage) which are due to new organizational structures in economy, administration and formation. It assumes a rigid duality of clearly defined employment on the one hand and clearly defined unemployment of the other hand. The

Austrian network advocates a basic income which is unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis without means test or work requirement and which is high enough to secure everybody's existence.

For further information (in German) see: www.grundeinkommen.at

* **BUENOS AIRES (AR)**, 13 December 2007: Workshop on "Income or Employment Guarantee?"

The Citizen Income Network in Argentina (Redaic (Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano)) organized together with the Centre of Labour Studies and Research ((Ceil-Piette (Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Laborales - Programa de Investigaciones Económicas sobre Tecnología, Trabajo y Empleo)) a workshop on "Income or Employment Guarantee? An Argentinean discussion between Basic Income and Employment of Last Resort.

It took place on Thursday 13th, December, 4.30pm, Saavedra 15, Buenos Aires.

For further information; Corina Rodríguez Enríquez, Conicet - Ciepp, Buenos Aires – Argentina, www.ciepp.org.ar

Future events:

* **OXFORD (UK), 9 February 2008: Conference on Social aspects of Green Economics**

In association with various book publishers, Pluto Press, Zed Books, The International Journal of Green Economics, Inderscience Publishers of academic journals, Etopia Belgium Journal, and Alternatives Economiques, France, The Green Economics Institute organizes a Green Economics Conference/Seminar at Oxford University (UK) on "Social aspects of Green Economics: basic income, women and debt poverty, pensions, trafficking in women, and women's access to economics". This conference shall take place at Mansfield College, Oxford University, UK, and will also be run in the French Senate in June 2008. For further information: <http://www.greeneconomics.org.uk/>

* **BOSTON (US)**, 7-9 March 2008, Seventh USBIG Congress

The USBIG Network will hold its Seventh Congress at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel on March 7-9, 2008. The tentative program is now online at <http://www.usbig.net/cong2008/schedule2008.html>

The Conference will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Economic Association, which will hold hundreds of sessions on a wide variety of topics. Attendees of either conference are welcome to attend the sessions of the other. At the Congress, academics and activists from the United States, Canada, Britain, and several other countries will discuss issues such as Occupational Citizenship, the Ethics of BIG, the Politics of Basic Income, Economic Insecurity and Poverty, the Relationship between BIG and Work, the Meaning of Freedom, Distribution and Redistribution, and the Institutional Context for Progressive Policy. Featured speakers include Philippe Van Parijs, Eduardo Suplicy, Yannick Vanderborght, Jurgen de Wispelaere, Guy Standing, Sean Healy, and Brigid Reynolds. Everyone welcome to attend the conference.

The 2008 USBIG Conference is organized by a committee of Michael Lewis (chair), Eri Noguchi, and Almaz Zelleke. For more information go to <http://www.usbig.net> or contact Michael Lewis at mlewis@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

3. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

* **BOLIVIA:** Universal Lifetime Basic Income for Dignified Aging

On October 15th, 2007, Bolivian president Evo Morales sent an initiative of law for creating the Universal Lifetime Basic Income for Dignified Aging which will consist of a universal and unconditional monetary transfer of around 26 US\$ for all people aged 60 and above in the country. Such amount is a starting point taking into account the poverty line in Bolivia. Evo Morales described basic income as a long dream and warned that should it not be approved by parliament he will put out a decree putting it into action immediately.

In Latin America, through diverse pathways, the proposal for universal, unconditional income recognized as a right is making progress. In particular the Bolivian proposal reinforces the universal citizen's pension of Mexico City, active since 2001. Such a pension is now completely universal in the City, each month 420,000 persons get it, its amount is around 70 american dollars and has been granted as a right in the Law, that means is demandable to the Government of Mexico City.

* **CANADA:** Faith leaders from Greater Victoria area calls for a livable income

On October 17, 2007 (the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty), several faith leaders from Greater Victoria held a press conference and called for a livable income for all Canadians. This press conference focused on Victoria and British Columbia, where poverty is on the increase. In spite of a booming economy, the gap between the rich and the poor has never been larger, activists say. "A crisis-based approach to dealing with the complex problems of poverty and homelessness does not work" said Rev. Harold Munn, rector at St. John the Divine Anglican Church and a member of Victoria's Mayor Taskforce on Homelessness. "Building shelters and keeping income assistance and disability rates so low and so difficult to access that shopping at food banks is a necessity- these strategies do not end poverty but perpetuate it. Faith communities, in particular, are aware of the impacts that these approaches have had on the lives and the dignity of poor people."

Besides Rev. Harold Munn, speakers included Fr. Dean Henderson (St. Andrew's Cathedral), Kathy Hoodikoff (Christ Church Cathedral), Ross White (Cadboro Bay United), Alan Saunders (First Metropolitan United) as well as speakers from St. Vincent de' Paul society, 9-10 Club and Faith in Action. Speakers emphasized that people of faith long for the day when poverty is indeed eradicated, and the food banks, clothing exchanges, and soupkitchens they are currently operating, close their doors forever.

For poverty to end, they argued, governments at every level must support through their policy and funding commitments: affordable and/or supportive housing options, addiction and mental health treatment programs, and a *livable income for all Canadians*.

For further information, contact Rev. Harold Munn at 250-383-7169, or Rev. Al Tysick at 250-388-0343.

Note that On October 18, 2007, Federal Senator Tony Martin (New Democratic Party) called for a comprehensive plan to fight poverty in Canada. In a House of Commons statement, he urged the government to move past its "empty words in a Throne Speech" to work with all parties and build a anti-poverty plan. Martin said the plan could unite "progressive social democrats and compassionate conservatives". For further information, please contact Rick Prashaw, Martin's Legislative Assistant, at (613) 992-8851. The Canadian National Anti-Poverty Organization applauded the initiative of MP Tony Martin. Without a national plan, NAPO argued, Canada is adrift in a sea of watery half-measures.

For further information, contact Rob Rainer, Executive Director/directeur général, National Anti-Poverty Organization / Organisation nationale anti-pauvreté, rainer@napo-onap.ca, www.napo-onap.ca

*** FRANCE:** Prime Minister promotes further research on “Universal Dividend”

The French Secretary of State for Prospective Studies and the Evaluation of Public Policies, Eric Besson, has been asked by Prime Minister François Fillon to explore possible ways of implementing a so-called “Universal Dividend”, or basic income, in France. In 2002, Christine Boutin, currently Minister for Housing and City Planning, had published a report on poverty and exclusion, in which she advocated the idea of a income by right for all French citizens. In his letter to Besson, PM François Fillon explicitly refers to this report, and asks for a cost-analysis in the light of foreign experiences. The new report on basic income should be finished at the end of March 2008.

For further information: <http://www.frs-ladroitehumaine.fr/>

*** GERMANY:** German Green Party votes against Unconditional Basic Income

The German Green Party voted at its last party convention with a majority of 60% against a proposal arguing for an Unconditional Basic Income. Within the past months a strong debate had been going on among Green party members, especially since the regional party of Baden Wuerttemberg (Bundesland) decided to support a UBI in its october convention. Some feared a strong defeat of the national party leaders because they were in favor of a means-tested "Grundsicherung". Although the decision of the Green Party national convention is bad news for UBI-supporters, it is good news at the same time. 40% of the votes supported the UBI-proposal. However, as Green Party member Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn said, it was not a UBI in the strict sense as it was based on a negative income tax.

The decision of the party convention is also good news for UBI-supporters because the party leadership included several elements of a basic income in their proposal in order to find the support of the majority of the delegates. As a result the resolution includes a basic income for children (which shall be introduced step by step), a temporary basic income and an eco-bonus (a basic income financed by eco-taxes). Financial sanctions for the unemployed in the case of not-accepting a job-offer or training shall be reduced so that they do not cut the benefit under the subsistence level. And even the proposal of a negative income tax shall be discussed further.

After the vote of the party congress of the Green party, supporters of the proposal of a UBI from other parties as Dieter Althaus (CDU) and Katja Kipping (Linkspartei) felt even encouraged in their engagement for a UBI. The public debate continues and in response to the convention several newspapers have published long articles on the UBI.

Weblinks to Websites in German:

The resolution of the party convention:

http://www.gruene.de/cms/partei/dokbin/207/207470.aufbruch_zu_neuer_gerechtigkeit.pdf

The defeated proposal for a UBI:

<http://www.gruene-bw.de/themen/wirtschaft-und-soziales/grundeinkommensbeschluss-im-ueberblick.html>

A preliminary collection of resolutions of branches of the Green party in favour of a UBI:

<http://www.robert-zion.de/sozial.htm>

A collection of newspaper articles on this topic:

<http://aktuelles.archiv-grundeinkommen.de/>

A collection of short interviews with UBI advocates in Germany commenting on the decision:
<http://www.webag.grundeinkommen.de/thema/akzente>

A comment by activist's network Freiheit statt Vollbeschaeftigung:
<http://freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de/blog/2007/11/die-grnen-gegen-ein-grundeinkommen.htm>

* **SOUTH AFRICA:** Basic Income Activist Margret Legum dies

Margaret Legum, 74, was an economist, a human rights advocate, and co-founder of the South African New Economics Foundation. USBIG reports that Legum died in Cape Town on November 1, following surgery for cancer. Legum spent 30 years in exile beginning in 1962 because of her activism against Apartheid. She was the author of *South Africa: Crisis for the West* (1964), which was influential in the imposition of international sanctions against the Apartheid regime. When she returned to South Africa, she campaigned against racism and for a fair economic system, an important component of which she believed was a Basic Income Grant (BIG). She hosted an event at the 2006 Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network in Cape Town, South Africa. According to Business Day, George Ellis, speaking at a memorial service for Legum said that a campaign for BIG would be a fitting memorial for her “unrelenting” support for BIG. For detailed reports on her remarkable life, go to:

<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/topstories.aspx?ID=BD4A605297>

<http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=16435>

http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=6&art_id=vn20071203043017797C823109

* **SPAIN:** BASIC INCOME DISCUSSED AT THE PARLIAMENT

Last 2nd of October a debate on Basic Income took place in a plenary session of the Spanish Parliament, following a bill presented by two political parties: the Republican Left of Catalonia (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC, a left-wing pro-independence party that is currently a member of the coalition that rules the Catalan government) and the United Left (Izquierda Unida – Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds, IU-ICV, the main organisation at the left of the Socialist Party, PSOE). The parliamentary debate that took place on October the 2nd had many repercussions in the press. The interventions made by the representatives of the parties in Parliament can be read in the parliamentary report (*Diario de Sesiones*), which can also be downloaded from <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/textos/index.php?x=657>.

Three days after the debate had taken place, on the 5th of October, the newspaper *El País* published an article signed by two members of the Spanish Basic Income Network, Antoni Domènech and Daniel Raventós. The article aimed to answer many of the statements made at the parliamentary session and also the treatment that *El País* had given in its coverage of the debate. The article, entitled “Who is afraid of a Citizens’ Basic Income?” claimed, among other things:

“*The salary of the homeless and the banker*” –thus entitled *El País* the last 3rd of October its article about the parliamentary debate that took place the previous day about the bill presented by ERC and IU-ICV to create a citizens’ basic income (BI). Among the many dull statements that were made, the words of the representative of the Nationalist Basque Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV) stand out: “Do you want to create the right not to work? That is diabolical!” The three right-wing parties – the Popular Party (Partido Popular, PP), the Nationalist Vasc Party (PNV) and the Catalan Convergence and Unit (Convergència i Unió, CiU) – agreed completely. The government party, PSOE, which enlists among its MPs some of the more veteran advocates of the idea (for instance, the ex-minister Jordi Sevilla) apparently neglected the proposal.

Whoever reads the parliamentary report will easily note a vivid contrast, in form and substance, in the arguments exchanged. Joan Tardà (ERC) and Carme García (IU-ICV) presented with robustness and

sobriety some of the arguments in favour of a BI that, during the last twenty years, have been scrutinised and debated in different academic circles and social forums. The other side of the debate, blatantly dismissive of a long and thorough international discussion (in which Nobel prizes and recognised philosophers, among many others, have taken part), offered only rhetorical pirouettes, deceptive arguments that nobody with a sense of intellectual self-respect would dare to use today – mainly this: “people would not work!”

(...)

BI has formal features of secularity, unconditionality and universality that are identical to those of the universal democratic suffrage. Just as it happens with the right to vote, the right to a BI derives from the mere fact of existing as a citizen –or as an accredited resident—independently of the sex, ethnicity, or level of income (rich people also vote!), of the sexual orientation or religious beliefs (if any). Something of such an elementary justice seems intimidating. The fights for the universal suffrage for all men, rich and poor, and then for all women, were also seen as a crazy diabolical idea. It is not unlikely that in a few decades everybody will be scandalised by the “arguments” of those who today are shocked by a measure that would “diabolically” promote “laziness”. Just as today we are scandalised by the “arguments” of those who, not so long ago, were shocked by the simple idea that everybody could vote, including the poor, women and also, why not, the “lazy” and even the poor devils.

A complete version of the article can be found at

<http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/textos/index.php?x=658>

*** UNITED KINGDOM:** Economist and Basic Income advocate, Hermione Parker, dies

Hermione Parker was a political economist and cofounder of Britain’s Basic Income Research Group 1984, which later became the Citizen’s Income Trust. The following is from Susan Raven’s obituary of Parker for the Citizen’s Income Newsletter: "Born in Quetta in 1928, she was at St. Andrew's University. In 1989 she published a book on the subject of the integration of the tax and benefit systems, *Instead of the Dole*. It put forward the idea of a Basic Income Guarantee as a feasible alternative to our present welfare state. In 1987 she also founded the Family Budget Unit and thereafter served for many years as its director and driving force. She was responsible for reports on budget standards for families in 1998, for pensioners in 2000, and subsequently for Muslim families and low paid families in the East End of London in 2001. She was a person of impressive energy and intelligence and her contribution to any cause she supported was always invaluable."

The Citizen’s Income Newsletter is online at:

<http://www.citizensincome.org/resources/newsletter%20issue%203%202007.shtml>

*** UNITED STATES:** Hillary Clinton endorses a baby bond

USBIG reports that the leading contender in U.S. Presidential Race, Hillary Clinton, has endorsed the “baby bond”, a small one-time universal income grant. A baby bond is not a basic income, but is based on the same idea of a universal claim to resources. The baby bond idea has already been put into practice in Britain, where the Labour Government introduced it in 2005. The idea is to give every new born child a bond that matures when the child comes of age.

Devlin Barrett, of the Associated Press, quoted Clinton as saying, “I like the idea of giving every baby born in America a \$5,000 account that will grow over time, so that when that young person turns 18 if they have finished high school they will be able to access it to go to college or maybe they will be able to make that down payment on their first home.” One of Clinton’s rationales for the proposal was that wealthy people “get to have all kinds of tax incentives to save, but most people can't afford to do that.” Clinton’s endorsement followed an article in *Time Magazine* making a similar proposal. Clinton has not yet come out with a formal proposal for a baby bond in the weeks since she made her statements.

Bruce Ackerman and Ann Alstott, who's book *The Stakeholder Society* proposed a much larger baby bond, praised Clinton's statements. They wrote in the *American Prospect*, "By the time the child reaches 18, this bond will grow to \$10,000 or more, depending on the interest rate, providing a citizen inheritance at a crucial moment of transition to adult life."

For further information:

http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thetrail/2007/09/28/clinton_floats_baby_bonds.html

http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=d8rulmjo0&show_article=1

<http://www.taxfoundation.org/blog/printer/22650.html>

http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=an_inheritance_for_all

4. PUBLICATIONS

*ENGLISH

ACKERMAN, Bruce & ALSTOTT, Ann (2007), 'An Inheritance for All', *The American Prospect*, online edition, October 4, 2007. Available at:

http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=an_inheritance_for_all

At the end of September 2007, Hillary Clinton argued in favour of a bold idea: every child should have the right to share in the inherited wealth created by preceding generations. As a citizen, he or she should receive a baby bond of \$5,000 that represents an inheritance from the wealth created by his predecessors. Ackerman & Alstott (Yale University, USA), authors of the *Stakeholder Society*, briefly sketch the rich history of this proposal, and explain why the Clinton proposal deserves a serious debate. "Like her or not", Ackerman and Alstott argue, "Clinton deserves credit for taking a risk in raising a bold idea that could well contribute to a better America. If we ignore such acts of leadership, we will have only ourselves to blame when we complain that the candidates are boring us to distraction."

See also Ackerman & Alstott article in *The Guardian* (U.K.), published on October 11, 2007: http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/bruce_ackerman_and_anne_alstott/2007/10/inherit_the_windfall.html

RAVENTOS, Daniel (2007), *Basic Income: The Material Conditions of Freedom*, London: Pluto Press, 240pp., ISBN: 9780745326290 (Paperback), ISBN: 9780745326306 (Hardback), <http://www.plutobooks.com/>

Basic Income is a policy idea that could help us revolutionise the way we organise society, Daniel Raventós argues. Raventós is chair of the Spanish Basic Income Network, and Professor at the University of Barcelona. His book is a first-class introduction to basic income - what it is, how we can organise it, and how it can benefit the majority in different spheres of their lives. Basic Income is simply the idea that everyone in a given society has a right to a minimal income. This is paid by the state out of taxation. Unconditionally set at a subsistence level, it would take the place of unemployment and other conditional benefits, and enhance effective freedom. This would bring profound social changes, Raventós argues. The campaign in favour of basic income is growing and governments are beginning to take notice. This is a clear, concise guide to the principles and practicalities of this revolutionary idea.

According to Philip Pettit, L.S. Rockefeller University Professor of Politics and Human Values, Princeton University, Raventós' book is 'The best introduction. It offers a first rate history of the idea, develops a powerful case in its support, and explores all its implications'. In his endorsement, Philippe Van Parijs, Professor of Economic and Social Ethics at the Université Catholique de Louvain and Visiting Professor of Philosophy at

Harvard University indicates that "in several countries, no one has contributed more to the public emergence of [basic income] than Daniel Raventós.'

STANDING, Guy (2007), 'How Cash Transfers Boost Work and Economic Security', *DESA Working Paper No. 58*, ST/ESA/2007/DWP/58, UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Available at: http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2007/wp58_2007.pdf

There has long been a minority view that providing people with cash is an effective way of combating poverty and economic insecurity while promoting livelihoods and work. The mainstream view has been that giving people money, without conditions or obligations, promotes idleness and dependency, while being unnecessarily costly. Better, they contend, would be to allocate the available money to schemes that create jobs and/or human capital and that produce infrastructure. This paper by Guy Standing, co-Chair of BIEN, reviews recent evidence on various types of scheme and on several pilot cash transfer schemes, assessing them by reference to principles of social justice.

Paper available at: http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2007/wp58_2007.pdf

For further information: GuyStanding@standingnet.com

* SPANISH

YANES, Pablo (ed.) (2007), *Derecho a la existencia y libertad real para todos*, México D.F.: Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México, ISBN 9689037-35-8, 280 p.

This book gathers the papers given at the "First International Seminar on Basic Income: The Right to Existence and Real Freedom for All. Emerging Human Rights and New Social Policy", held in Mexico City in June 2007 and convened by Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México and the Department for Social Development of the Government of Mexico City.

Parts of the book include "The Right to Existence and the Material Conditions of Freedom", with chapters by Daniel Raventós, Julio Boltvinik and Martí Batres; "Need and Feasibility of Basic Income: The International Experience", with chapters by David Casassas and María Julia Bertomeu; "Pertinence of the Proposal of a Basic Income in Mexico", with papers by Pablo Yanes, Enrique del Val, Pedro Moreno and Eduardo Marrufo, and Oscar Conde; and "Perspectives of the International Movement for a Basic Income", with papers by David Casassas, Eduardo Suplicy and María Julia Bertomeu. Appendixes include information on the "Group for the Promotion of Basic Income in Mexico", which aims to be recognized by BIEN as an official network at Dublin's Congress, and details and goals of the "Permanent Seminar on Basic Income in Mexico" that is conducted by this Group. The book also includes a foreword by Manuel Pérez Rocha (Rector of Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México) and Martí Batres Guadarrama (Social Development Secretary of the Government of Ciudad de México).

It is a book that interestingly combines the theory and the practice of unconditional cash transfers schemes – it is worth recalling that its coordinator and some of its authors have been responsible for the implementation of a Basic Pension in Mexico City. As it is said on its half-title page, this volume constitutes the start of the systematic discussion on Basic Income in Mexico. Basic Income is presented as an indispensable point of reference for all discussions and proposals on social policy from the perspective of the recognition and exigency of rights.

5. NEW LINKS

* MICRO-SIMULATION ON BASIC INCOME

French economist Marc de Basquiat has developed a micro-simulation model for the financing of basic income in France. His well-designed website can be viewed at www.allocationuniverselle.com

Comments and suggestions are welcome at : marc@de-basquiat.com

* DEVELOPMENTS ON BASIC INCOME

Within the Vivant (Belgium) website, Paul Nollen posts updates on the development of the basic income debate in various countries. It can be found at:

<http://www.vivant.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=64>

* IMPLEMENTING A GREEN BASIC INCOME

Discussions on a green basic income on kneell.googlepages.com/c-change. The following idea is explored:

"Raise the price of fuel. Raise it massively. Raise it to what we're actually paying when externalities are factored in. Then give everyone a grant to pay for it. Give us all enough to buy the amount we tend to use per year. (In the US, that's 500 gallons; about the same here in Australia.) Instead of giving us the money in subsidized fuel, give it to us directly. Let us, let everyone, make choices for themselves about how to spend that money, how to allocate their personal resources. Since we're spending that money anyway, it wouldn't cost society a thing. With the money no longer getting sucked out of local economies, it would have the obvious economic benefits. Those who don't drive - perhaps because they're unemployed, would be rewarded for not doing so (given directly what they're now generally forced to pay for). "

6. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

Co-chair:

Eduardo SUPPLY, 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 www.basicincome.org, 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)ENEFACTORS" 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.

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