

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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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>> .

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1. EDITORIAL

It has been one of the recurrent paradoxes - and curses ? - of basic income that it is advocated by people situated on both the left and the right of the political spectrum. Yet another, quite spectacular instance of this contrast is provided by the coincidence of two very recent events. On the 28th of September, Christine Boutin, leader of a small, particularly conservative component of Chirac's right-wing coalition, presents a report advocating a "universal dividend". At about exactly the same time, the German PDS, heir of the East German communist party, sets up a web site and organises a first public debate on the idea of an unconditional basic income, thus showing that its acting chair Katja Kipping meant business when she spoke out in favour of it at a recent party convention.

These developments and many others will be discussed at our Barcelona Congress on 18-21 September 2004. BIEN's Executive Committee will meet in Barcelona on 25 October 2003 in order to further specify a number of features of the Congress, jointly with the local organising committee, to visit its site, and also to think about the future of BIEN beyond the Congress. If you wish to take an active role in the preparation of the congress by organising a panel, do get in touch urgently with the chairman of the scientific committee (see instructions below).

And do keep your newsletter informed of any relevant publications and developments you are aware of.

The Executive Committee

2. EVENTS

DRESDEN (DE), 10 October 2003: RIGHT TO INCOME VERSUS RIGHT TO WORK

Under the heading "Recht auf Einkommen versus Recht auf Arbeit. Die Ostdeutschen als Avantgarde", the PDS, heir of the East German communist party, is taking the initiative of launching a debate on basic income. Participants will include Katja Kipping, acting chair of the party, sociologist Wolfgang Engler (author of the book *Die Ostdeutschen als Avantgarde*, which argues that the East German's task is not to copy ready-made models but to invent new forms of social and personal life) and Ronald Blaschke (active in the unemployed movement and Saxony's poverty conference).

For further information: <http://www.linxxnet.de/aktuell/1000-fuer-alle.htm> and <mailto:Michael.Leutert@pds-sachsen.de>.

WASHINGTON (US), 20-22 February 2004: 3rd CONGRESS OF USBIG
The third congress of the US Basic Income Guarantee Network will again be held in conjunction with the Eastern Economics Association, this time in Washington, DC at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. A call for papers has been issued (deadline: 7 November 2003). For further information, <http://www.usbig.net/> and <<mailto:Karl@Widerquist.com>>.

BARCELONA (ES), 18-21 September 2004: 10th CONGRESS OF BIEN
BIEN's 10th congress will take place on 18-21 September 2004 as part of a set of five events on "emerging rights" organised by the Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya (www.idhc.net) within the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures (www.barcelona2004.org). The coordinator of the local organising committee is David Casassas <casassas@eco.ub.es>. Detailed information about the congress and its context appeared in NewsFlash 21 and is available on <http://www.basicincome.org>.
BIEN's Executive Committee is meeting in Barcelona on Saturday 25 October 2003 in order to start giving our programme a precise shape. Those wishing to propose a panel, i.e. a pre-organised workshop, must contact urgently (if not already done) José Noguera <jose.noguera@uab.es>, chairman of the scientific committee. Please provide the proposed title of the panel, a brief formulation of questions to be discussed and a first list of potential participants (4 paper givers + 1 chair). Make sure the participants are from different countries and do not hesitate to recruit competent people who are quite critical of basic income but have something to say we need to hear.

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

BRAZIL: THREE MORE STEPS TOWARDS A CITIZEN'S INCOME

At a meeting with Brazil's 27 State governors, on 30 September 2003, President Lula announced the integration into a unified system of several existing income transfer programmes, mainly the minimum income program related to education or Bolsa Escola, the minimum income programme related to health or Bolsa Alimentação; the Zero Hunger programme's Cartão Alimentação ; and the gas help or Auxílio Gás program. The federal government will endeavour to coordinate its action with that of the 27 States and of the 5561 municipalities. Under the new integrated system, all families with a per capita income below a threshold of 100 reals per month will be entitled to an income supplement that grows with the number of children (with a maximum of 95 reals), subject to school attendance for children aged 7 to 15, and is paid to the mother through a magnetic card valid for a year, with no restriction to the purchase of food (contrary to an earlier version of the Zero-Hunger benefit programme).

Parallel to these measures with immediate effect, Brazil's federal senate had approved in June 2002 a bill of law initially proposed by Senator

Eduardo Suplicy (PT), which would gradually implement a basic citizen's income in Brazil, starting in 2005 with those most in need. On 2 October 2003, Representative Paulo Bernardo (PT-PR) presented a favourable report on the

bill to the Finance Committee of the federal Chamber of Deputies.

Finally, in September 2003, the Chamber of Deputies approved a Constitutional Amendment stating (among other things) that "a Minimum income program will be instituted so as to provide the necessary subsistence to persons or families, giving priority first to those most in need, that might be financed in a coordinated way by the Union, States and Municipalities". This Amendment still needs to be approved by the Senate, which is expected to happen by the end 2003.

For further information: <EDUARDO.SUPLICY@SENADOR.GOV.BR>

GERMANY: EAST GERMAN DEBATE ON BASIC INCOME

At the June 2003 national convention of the PDS - the Left-wing party that grew out of East Germany's communist party after Germany's reunification -, its acting chairperson Katja Kipping proposed an unconditional basic social security (bedingungslose soziale Grundsicherung) at a level of \approx 1000 per month. In the aftermath of this declaration, the PDS wants to foster an active debate on the idea of such a "basic social security" (also referred to as "Existenzgeld" or "Grundeinkommen"), defined as a "universal and needs-independent payment made, unconditional, tax-financed and independent of socially constructed categories". For this purpose, it is organising a public debate in Dresden on 10 October 2003 (see above) and setting up a web site baptized "1000 for all" : <http://www.linxxnet.de/aktuell/1000-fuer-alle.htm>.

For further information: Michael Leutert <Michael.Leutert@web.de>.

FRANCE: UNIVERSAL DIVIDEND RECOMMENDED TO THE PRIME MINISTER

On 17 April 2003, France's Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin asked Christine Boutin, a member of the pro-government majority in the National Assembly, to write a report on the causes of social exclusion in France. This report was presented to the Prime Minister on 29 September 2003. To the general surprise, it advocates, under the label "dividende universel", the idea of an unconditional basic income of Euro 300, granted to all without means test or work requirement. In a vigorous plea, Boutin said that her proposal was justified by the fact that "we are all heirs of the know-how of past generations' and we owe this capital to future generations". She regards this particular proposal as the beacon ("mesure-phare") of her plan, and it was emphasized accordingly in the media (Reuters 29/9/03, Le Monde and Libération 30/9/03) In a first reaction, French officials told the press that "the Prime Minister realizes how generous this proposal is, and is going to ask experts for an analysis of the economical, social, and financial impact of the idea". Boutin is a controversial figure in French politics. A few years ago, she led the right-wing opposition to the "Pacte civil de solidarité" implemented by the

Jospin government to legalize relationships between unmarried couples, including homosexuals. In the first round of the 2002 presidential election, she obtained 1.2% of the vote. She is currently a national deputy for the Yvelines (next to Paris) and the leader of the Forum des Républicains Sociaux, a small political party affiliated to President Jacques Chirac's coalition UMP (Union pour la majorité présidentielle).

IRAQ: US MAJORITY IN FAVOUR OF OIL DIVIDENDS

Ever since the idea of implementing Alaska's Permanent oil fund idea in Iraq first emerged in the Spring of 2003, the discussion has further developed. For example, on 13 June 2003, a national poll revealed that 59% of American potential voters were in favour of this idea, 23% against and 17% not sure (see <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=713>). On 23 June 2003, Paul Bremer, the US President's envoy to Iraq, gave a speech at a World Economic Forum meeting in Amman (Jordan) endorsing the Alaska Permanent Fund model as one way of connecting Iraq's oil revenue directly to Iraq's citizens.

For further arguments and information, see

Article by Steve Clemons in *The New York Times*, 9 April 2003

<http://www.steveclemons.com/A-AlaskaFundIraq.htm>

Article by Joshua Marshall in *The Hill*, 2 July 2003

<http://www.thehill.com/marshall/070203.aspx>

Article by John Tierney in *The New York Times*, 10 September 2003

<http://www.progress.org/2003/oil08.htm>

or contact: "Steve Clemons" <Clemons@newamerica.net>, Executive Vice President of the New America Foundation (Washington, DC).

5. RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

PATEMAN Carole. "The Equivalent of the Right to Land, Life, and Liberty? Democracy and the Idea of a Basic Income", available at

<http://www.oid.ucla.edu/Webcast/FRL/Pateman/> (Lecturer's address: <pateman@ucla.edu>)

This is a 50-minute lecture available as a Web Broadcast in both streaming audio and streaming video. Carole Pateman is a professor of Political Science at the University of California Los Angeles, reputed feminist writer and a long-time advocate of basic income. In an accessible language, it says what a basic income is, what its main advantages are and what criticisms it raises. She emphasizes the problem of democratic participation and "self-governance" when people do not have the ability to be independent and economically self-sustaining, and discussed how a basic income would affect the division of labor and gender equity.

GREENSTUART, Malcolm. *Cosmic Accounting. The Economic System for the New Millenium. Pigdale Publishing* (Yanakee, Victoria, Australia, blackockatoo6@@bigpond.com.au), 136p., ISBN 0 9579573 19. (Author's address: Malcolm Green <Malcolm.Green@unisa.edu.au>)

The world is heading toward ecological breakdown. Billions of people live in dire poverty while trillions of dollars are spent elsewhere uselessly maintaining positions of competitive advantage. The radical new economic regime advocated by electrical engineer Malcolm Greenstuart would put an end to all this. Its core consists in making energy the basic currency. The cost of goods would be the amount of energy it has taken to make them, and everyone would receive a free electricity income derived from solar energy every day.

GERMAN

MITSCHKE, Joachim. *Erneuerung des deutschen Einkommensteuerrechts*. Saarbrücken, April 2003, 194p. (Author's address: mail@prof-mitschke.de)

This is the latest version of the integrated tax reform package which Joachim Mitschke, recently retired as professor of public finance at the University of Frankfurt and life member of BIEN, has been advocating for two decades (*Steuer- und Transferordnung aus einem Guss*, Baden-Bade, 1985): a shift from income to consumption combined with the transformation of guaranteed minimum income provisions into a citizen's income ("Bürgergeld"), administered in the forme of a negative tax system. On 28 September 2003, the Frankfurt-based Humanistische Stiftung rewarded Professor Mitschke's work on tax reform by awarding him a prize of $\text{€}165.000$ (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 29/9/03).

ITALIAN

VAN PARIJS, Philippe. "Il coraggio di proporre il reddito dicittadinanza", in *Reset* (www.reset.it) 78, July-August 2003, pp. 34-35. Followed by Thomas Casadei, "E tornato il filosofo del basic income".

An in-depth interview on basic income conducted by Elisabetta Ambrosi for one of the Italian Left's leading magazines.

ZANETTI, Gianfrancesco (ed.). *Elementi di etica pratica. Argomenti normativi e spazi del diritto*, Roma: Carocci, 2003.

An anthology of applied ethics, which includes a discussion of the problematic ethical credentials of an unconditional basic income, with contributions by by Luca Baccelli ("Lavoro, cittadinanza e welfare state: una prospettiva critica sul reddito minimo garantito"), Thomas Casadei ("Reddito minimo garantito e diritti sociali: gli spazi del pubblico") and Danilo Zolo ("Commento").

PORTUGUESE

ROUANET, Luiz Paulo. "Justiça como eqüidade: uma proposta brasileira", in *Social Democracia Brasileira* 2 (7), May-June 2003, 17-23.

Published in a special issue on "Justice" of the magazine of the PSDB (former Brazilian President Fernando-Henrique Cardoso's party), this article by a professor at the Pontitifical University of Campinas presents a philosophical justification of basic income, as advocated by Brazilian Senator Eduardo Suplicy and Belgian philosopher Philippe Van Parijs, on the basis of a Rawlsian conception of justice.

SPANISH

GIRALDO, Jorge (ed.). *La renta básica, más allá de la sociedad salarial*.

Medellín: Ediciones Escuela Nacional Sindical, 2003. (Editor's address: Jorge Alberto Giraldo Ramirez <JGiraldo2@comfama.com.co>)

Another major publication on basic income at the initiative of Colombia's National Trade Union School. It contains European contributions by Philippe Van Parijs (La renta básica: qué, cómo y cuándo en el norte y en el sur?), Francisco Ramos (Empleo y renta básica: Chantaje de la supervivencia o autorrealización), David Casassas & Daniel Raventos (La renta básica como caja de resistencia: Poder de negociación de los trabajadores y libertad como no-dominación), and Daniel Raventos (La renta básica en el reino de España: Breve historia, dos simposios y algunos debate), South American contributions by Jorge Giraldo Ramirez (La renta básica como criterio), Jorge Ivan Gonzalez & Alfredo Sarmineto (El ingreso básico universal y la focalización), Alberto Barbeito & Ruben Lo Vuolo (El ingreso ciudadano en la agenda de políticas públicas de la Argentina), Eduardo Suplicy (De la renta mínima a la renta básica en Brasil) and an extensive bibliography.

SAVATER, Fernando. "¿ Progressará el progresismo?", prologue to Ramiro Pinto Cañon, *Los Fundamentos de la Renta Básica y la perstroika del capitalismo*, León (Spain): Entitema, 2003, 820p. (Author's address: Ramiro Pinto, Apartado de correos 587 León, Spain, contact address: jose.m.sanchez <jose.m.sanchez@emailpersonal.com>)

In the brief preface to the monumental book on basic income just published by the radical green activist Pinto Cañon (see newsflash 22), Spain's most popular philosopher Fernando Savater (professor of ethics at the University of San Sebastian) comes out forcefully in favour of an unconditional basic income. In the present desert of left-wing projects, he writes, "the proposal of establishing a citizen's basic income [renta básica de ciudadanía] is the only more or less viable idea we have heard in the last decade for going beyond the current system of social protection... No doubt, the implementation of this basic income should create problems and will have contra-indications, as is the case with any renovating project, but it is an idea which the left should start discussing seriously, in

terms of both viability and desirability."

5. 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: BE55 0341 1516 6344, Swift code: GEBABEBB), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussel, Belgium

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