

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.

BIENOnline: <http://www.basicincome.org>

E-mail: <<mailto:bien@basicincome.org>>

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BIEN's NewsFlash contains up-to-date information on recent events and publications related to BIEN or basic income more generally. The NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to over 1000 subscribers throughout Europe and beyond, and simultaneously made available for consultation or download at BIENOnline <<http://www.basicincome.org/>>. Requests for free subscription or 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>> .

This NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of Bruce Ackerman, Markus Blümel, David Casassas, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Robley George, Sean Healy, Jose Luis Rey, Steve Shafarman, Eduardo Suplicy, Yannick Vanderborght, Patrick van Male and Karl Widerquist.

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1. EDITORIAL

Some news from unexpected corners, such as Iraq or the Sahara, some other less surprising items to enjoy or deplore, a brief report on several new relevant books and special journal issues, and a reminder of forthcoming events: this is what you will find in this news flash for you to ponder about over the Summer vacation.

There is still plenty of time before our Barcelona Congress, but one aspect of it needs our attention at this early stage. As mentioned in the previous news flash, we want the parallel workshops to have more focus and structure than they tended to have in the past, and therefore welcome proposals for "panels": sets of four papers around a common theme. Prospective co-ordinators of such panels should get in touch with Professor Jose Noguera <jose.noguera@uab.es>, chairman of the scientific committee of the Congress, no later than 30 September. Have a lovely Summer.

The Executive Committee

2. EVENTS

LINZ (AT), 17 May 2003: Workshop on social cohesion

The Austrian network on basic income and social cohesion ("Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt"), founded in the Autumn of 2002, organised a first one-day workshop in the city of Linz in collaboration with the Katholische Sozialakademie (which co-hosted BIEN's 1996 Congress). Among the speakers, Dietmar Koehler (coordinator of an unemployed association), Margit Appel and Lieselotte Wohlgenannt (Katholische Sozialakademie) and Manfred Füllsack (Universität Wien) argued explicitly for a basic income. The aim of the network is to further the debate on basic income as an alternative to the current welfare system (and its hardening into workfare. Its founding members include Alois Riedlsperger SJ (director of the KSOe), the

philosopher Karl Reitter (Univ. Wien) and the feminist theologian Michaela Moser.

For further information: Markus Blümel <redaktion@ksoe.at>, "Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt", c/o Kath. Sozialakademie Oesterreichs, Schottenring 35/DG, A-1010 Wien, Tel: 01-310 51 59-70, Fax: 01-310 68 28, www.grundeinkommen.at

BARCELONA (ES), 3 June 2003: Socialist conference on basic income
A conference organised by the Fundació Rafael Campalans, a foundation closely linked to the Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC), with the active participation of Antoni Castells (PSC secretary for economic affairs) and Jordi Sevilla (Secretary for Economic Policy and Labour of Spain's socialist party PSOE). There were four roundtables: "Basic Income: a citizenry right?" (with Daniel Raventós and María José Añón); "Basic Income in the Welfare State" (with Jose Noguera); "Financial feasibility of the Basic Income" (with Magda Mercader, Rafael Pinilla and Luis Sanzo) and "Labour Market" (with David Casassas). A background document was prepared by Jorge Calero, member of both the PSC and the Red Renta Basica (Spain's basic income network). Basic income seems to emerge as the horizon of the process of rationalization and unification of social and tax policies that the PSC is planning.

For further information: David Casassas <casassas@eco.ub.es>

BUENOS AIRES (AR), 17 June 2003: Roundtable on Citizen's Income
Ingreso ciudadano, trabajo y democracia. Potencialidades de una renta básica

Roundtable discussion on basic income at the Economics Faculty of the University of Buenos Aires, with the participation of Antoni Doménech (Universidad de Barcelona), Daniel Raventós (Universidad de Barcelona) and Rubén Lo Vuolo (Senior Scholar at the CIEPP, Buenos Aires). The visit to Argentina of philosopher Toni Domenech and RedRentaBasica Chairman Dani Raventos also provided an opportunity for organising other basic-income-related events at the initiative of the Centro de Políticas Públicas para el Socialismo (CEPPAS) on 10 June 2003, of the Institute of Philosophy of the Universidad de Buenos Aires on 19 June and of the Association of students in the social sciences of the same University on 24 June.

For further information: fenix@econ.uba.ar and ciepp@speedy.com.ar

BARCELONA (ES), 30 June - 4 July 2004: ATTAC Catalunya Summer School

This year's edition of the summer school of the "alter-globalization" movement ATTAC will include a session devoted to basic income and introduced by Daniel Raventos (Universitat de Barcelona), chairman of the Red Renta Basica.

For further information: presidencia@redrentabasica.org

WASHINGTON (US), 20-22 February 2004: USBIG Third Congress
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, check <http://www.usbig.net/> or contact Karl Widerquist <<mailto:Karl@Widerquist.com>>.

BARCELONA (ES), 18-21 September 2004: 10th BIEN Congress
BIEN's 10th congress will take place on 18-21 September 2004 (not on 23-25 September, as initially announced) 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>, researcher at the Universitat de Barcelona, and the coordinator of the scientific committee in charge of the final programme, in consultation with BIEN's executive committee, is José Noguera <jose.noguera@uab.es>. Detailed information about the congress and its context appeared in NewsFlash 21 and is available on <http://www.basicincome.org>.

Most urgent is the call for coordinators of panels, i.e. pre-organised workshops. Proposals must mention the 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. The panel proposals should reach the scientific committee of the Congress <jose.noguera@uab.es> as soon as possible and no later by **30 September 2003**. Further details on the web site.

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

AUSTRALIA: NEW WEB SITE

Dr John Tomlinson and Simon Schooneveldt, of the School of Humanities and Human Services at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) are setting up a new national Basic Income web-site for Australia. The site will be attached to the Centre for Social Change Research, within QUT. Its URL, when activated, will be <http://www.basicincome.qut.edu.au>. Allan McDonald, who used to promote Basic Income from Australia on his OASIS-Australia web-site (Organisation Advocating Support Income Studies in Australia) passed on his historical material, and any new material, across for inclusion on the new BIGA web-site, to maintain continuity.

For further information: Simon Schooneveldt (s.schooneveldt@qut.edu.au) and John Tomlinson (j.tomlinson@qut.edu.au).

AUSTRALIA: ADELAIDE FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

A major intellectual and cultural event organised every two years, the Adelaide Festival of Ideas chose "Hope and Fear" as the theme of its 2003 edition. One of its plenary evening sessions will be devoted to "Envisioning Real Utopias" and introduced by Erik Olin Wright, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin and editor of Verso's "Real Utopias", whose next volume is on basic income and stakeholder grants. Another will be devoted to "Basic Income: A Simple and Powerful Idea for the XXIst Century?" and introduced by Philippe Van Parijs, professor of economic and social ethics at the University of Louvain and secretary of BIEN. For further information: afa@adelaidefestival.net.au, <http://www.adelaidefestival.org.au>

BELGIUM: TOUGH TIMES FOR PRO-BI PARTIES

On 18 June 2003, Belgium had a general election after four years of a coalition government between the liberals, the socialists and, for the first time since they were founded around 1980, the Green parties. The most striking outcomes were a sharp rise (from 19.7% to 27.9%) of the socialist vote - especially its Flemish wing with Social Affairs Minister Frank Vandenbroucke (co-author of *Basic Income on the Agenda*, Amsterdam, 2000) - and a sharp fall (from 14.3 to 5.5 %) of the vote for the Greens - whose francophone wing was led by economist Philippe Defeyt, one of the co-ordinators of the Collectif Charles Fourier, which played a key role in the birth of BIEN. Owing to a new threshold of 5%, the Flemish wing of the Green party, the most explicit pro-BI party represented in the national Parliament, lost all its seats in both the Chamber and the Senate. As to Vivant, the party founded in 1997 by businessman and BIEN member Roland Duchatelet with a generous VAT-funded BI as its central policy, it attracted 1.2% of the vote, down from 2.9% when it first stood four years ago).

For further information: <http://www.vivant.org/>

BRAZIL: MINIMUM INCOME SOON IN THE CONSTITUTION ?

On 1 May 2003, President Lula, backed by Brazil's 27 state governors, officially proposed to the Brazilian National Congress some Fiscal and Social Security Constitutional Amendments. They propose a new Article 203 that would read as follows: "The Union shall institute a Minimum Income Programme whose purpose is to secure the subsistence of low income families. The Programme is to be jointly funded, and implemented, by means of convention with the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities". The Constitutional Amendment Proposals will be discussed, possibly amended, and voted on by the Senate and the House of representatives in the course of 2003.

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

IRAQ: TOWARDS AN ALASKA-TYPE UNIVERSAL OIL DIVIDEND?

According to an informative article in the Los Angeles Times (Warren Viet,

"A Fund Could Spread Iraq's Oil Wealth to Its Citizens: Under a proposal backed by two U.S. senators, petroleum checks would go to every household., 1 May 2003), —U.S. officials are weighing the merits of a provocative proposal to distribute a portion of Iraq's petroleum wealth to its 24 million citizens by sending periodic oil revenue checks to every Iraqi household. Similar in concept to Alaska's Permanent Fund, which last year paid \$1,540 to every man, woman and child who met residency requirements, the proposed Iraqi fund would represent a radical departure from traditional state control of oil revenue. The revenue-sharing plan, which has been embraced by several members of Congress, would pump a portion of future petroleum earnings directly into the nation's cash-starved economy by putting it in the pockets of ordinary Iraqis. "It's an economist's dream," said Robert Storer, executive director of Alaska's Permanent Fund. "You distribute money to each individual in Iraq, and they use it in whatever way best suits their purposes. It's a great way to deal with the rebuilding of the Iraqi economy." If endorsed by the Bush administration, it also would underscore repeated U.S. assurances that Iraq's vast petroleum reserves are being held in trust for its people, not for big oil companies, international financiers or the next set of palace occupants.". The same article quotes Secretary of State Colin L. Powell saying on 30 April: "The interesting concept that has been used in Alaska for so many years is under consideration. We're looking at that." Alaska lawmakers have educated him "over the years as to the merit of this approach to the use of oil to compensate the people in a way that they can make a choice as to how the wealth of the state is being used. And I think that's a concept that applies in the case of Iraq as well."

In the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 29 April 2003 (as viewed by BIEN member Robley George), Senator George Allen (Republican-Virginia) asked Powell "I would like to hear any comments or thoughts you may have on the constitution in Iraq of creating something like the Alaska Permanent Fund so that the people of Iraq indeed are the owners of not only their government but also of that key resource [oil]." Powell replied, "...the clear point is that if the people, if they had access to that money directly, as in the case of Alaska...a decision will be made to start a business, or educate a child, or build a house, or buying clothing--it will circulate in the economy. It will contribute to the economy". Senator Allen, continued "...I'd suspect if they would hold some sort of plebiscite or referendum on if they'd like to get a little dividend..." Secretary Powell replied again, "I'd think I would bet on it."

The US magazine Pensions and Investments compared several different oil funds, such as Kuwait's and Alberta's, and concluded that the Alaska fund (the only one that provides a universal dividend) provides the best model for Iraq. Senators Mary Landrieu (Democrat-Louisiana) and Lisa Murkowski (Republican-Alaska) actively support the idea. So did Steven Clemons (New America Foundation) in the New York Times, Guy Standing (ILO & BIEN) in the Financial Times, Scott E. Pardee (Middlebury College, Vermont) in the Washington Post, Steve Shafarman (Citizen Policies Institute & USBIG) in the Progress Report, Eduardo Suplicy in Folha de

São Paulo (12 June 2003) and George Ward (former coordinator for humanitarian assistance in the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance for Iraq) in the New York Times (13 June 2003: "As soon as the oil industry begins turning a profit on exports, we should give every Iraqi family a monthly payment. This would instantly dispel the popular myth that the coalition's intent was to seize Iraq's oil assets. It would eliminate widespread dependence on government food rations and could jump-start the consumer economy.").
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/13/opinion/13WARD.html?ex=1056506713&ei=1&en=82b0a868509e26d7>

IRELAND: BASIC INCOME IS WORKABLE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAYS
The issue of Basic Income was discussed at some length in the Dail (Irish Parliament) in the Leader's Questions session of 9 April 2003. A Green Paper was published in October 2002 by the Prime Minister's Department. A working group at the Department of Finance is now supposed to come up with a report that would take it into account. In reply to questions put to him, the Taoiseach showed himself non-committal but open: "It would be an enormous change and we have changed our tax system considerably in the past five or six years. Even some of those who were in favour of the studies and the work surrounding it have different views. It has to be discussed and analysed by many people. While I would not consider myself qualified to call it (sic), I believe it is workable... However, the plusses and minusses require enormous analysis. The full text of this exchange can be downloaded from
http://www.cori.ie/justice/basic_income/leaders_questions_9_04_03.pdf.
The Justice Commission of CORI has published an update on the costing of a full universal Basic Income for Ireland, available at
http://www.cori.ie/justice/soc_issues/basic_inc.htm.
Anne Miller gives an extensive overview of Irish developments in issue 2003/2 of the Citizen's Income newsletter, that can be downloaded from
<http://www.citizensincome.org/filelibrary/doc/newsletter,%20issue%202,%202003.doc>
For further information on the state of affairs in Ireland: Sean Healy <sean.healy@cori.ie>

SAHARA: A BASIC INCOME FUNDED BY THE EU?

Ever since 1975, when the Moroccan army invaded what used to be Spanish Western Sahara, the Sahraouis have been living in refugee camps on Algerian soil. They are now about 155.000 spread over four camps, with their own (Polisario-Front-linked) government in exile. Their daily subsistence takes the form of rations of food, clothing and other necessities distributed by the Red Crescent and funded by the European Commission's Development Department (ECHO programme) and the UN's World Food programme (PAM). These rations are distributed without means test (the ministers receive them too) or work test (there is hardly any job going anyway). Many Sahraouis supplement this basic ration with

modest supplements, sometimes in cash, sometimes not, that stem from working more or less regularly as truck drivers, nurses or teachers, or from raising some goats or camels, or from trading couscous, tea pots or old cars.

For further information: Patrick van Male (patrick_vm@hotmail.com), who worked there as a volunteer for one month.

SCOTLAND: A BASIC INCOME PARTY TAKES PART IN THE ELECTION

Christopher Monckton, a former advisor to Margaret Thatcher, set up the People's Alliance, a party whose programme includes as a central element the replacement of existing benefits by a universal benefit of £100 per week (about EUR 600 per month) paid to every adult citizen, coupled with a tax reform involving the replacement of national insurance contributions and the progressive income tax by a flat income tax of 30% and the replacement of the differentiated value-added tax by a universal purchase tax (see *Financial Times*, 22-23 March 2003). The party fielded about 10 candidates in the May 2003 election to the Scottish Parliament.

UNITED KINGDOM: THE BABY BOND IS BORN

In April 2003, the British Chancellor Gordon Brown revealed his new budget, which included for the first time, as promised in Labour's latest manifesto, a small basic endowment for all British people. Under this scheme, each newborn infant would be provided with a small capital sum - Pounds 500 (about EUR 800) for the poorest third of families, falling to Pounds 250 (about EUR 400) for the rest - that would be invested in the financial markets and on which the bearers would be free to draw from the age of 18. The government may later announce more payments as the child grows up. Family and friends will be able to top up this savings plan by up to Pounds 1,000 a year. They will mature when the babies reach 18, at which age they can splurge the money on whatever they like, or "the funds could be rolled over into other savings products," says the government, optimistically. The revolutionary aspect of this measure, Samuel Brittan comments in the *Financial Times* ("Placing capital into the wallets of babes", 10 April 2003, www.samuelbrittan.co.uk) is that for the first time a British government is committed to distributing capital to citizens as distinct from welfare in kind or social security payments. It is half a century since Anthony Eden, the former Conservative leader, used to talk about a "property-owning democracy". But nothing very much was done to achieve this goal apart from housing and mortgage subsidies, which distorted the property market and the general economy far more than they effectively redistributed wealth...It was a pleasant surprise to find such proposals incorporated in the Labour 2001 election manifesto. The idea had been promoted by several left-of-centre authors, including Julian Le Grand of the London School of Economics. But it has attracted radicals across the political spectrum. Two US authors, Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott, had espoused it in their widely discussed *Stakeholder Society*. David Owen canvassed it for the Social Democrats as early as 1984; and David Willetts, the Conservative social security spokesman, has

promoted it under the title "asset based welfare"... The big weakness, of course, is that the trust funds are small. The Treasury had originally suggested that with further modest contributions from the exchequer at later ages, and a 5 per cent real return on equity, the capital stake could eventually be worth some Pounds 1,600 per head. This compares with the Pounds 56,000 recommended by Ackerman and Alstott and the Pounds 10,000 proposed by Prof Le Grand." The Economist ("The germ of a good idea", 12 April 2003) is similarly cautious about the impact: "how much the scheme will help the poor is a moot point. For now, the chancellor's largesse is limited... And those doing the topping-up are unlikely to be from poor families. Still, the sums may offset some of the money that the poor will have to borrow to go to university."

5. RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

McKINNON Catriona. *Liberalism and the Defence of Political Constructivism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. (Author's address: <cm31@york.ac.uk>)

By way of illustration of the "radical potential" of a liberal approach that includes the social bases of self respect among its central concerns, York University political philosopher Catriona McKinnon discusses at some length the proposal of an unconditional basic income (pp. 138-142). An unconditional basic income would contribute to expanding the social bases of self-respect of the worst off by giving them more freedom to change jobs, access to more leisure time and a greater opportunity to use this leisure time for associational activities. However, it faces the serious objection that it exonerates of their personal responsibility those who take advantage of it to enjoy leisure while letting other do the work that funds it. Is this objection sufficient to offset the prima face advantages of a universal basic income from her radical liberal perspective? The author does not answer in her book.

McKINNON Catriona. "Basic Income, Self-Respect and Reciprocity", in *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 2003. (Author's address: <cm31@york.ac.uk>)

In her *Liberalism and the Defence of Political Constructivism* (Palgrave, 2002), Catriona McKinnon hinted at a radical liberal case for an unconditional basic income inspired by John Rawls's emphasis on the social bases of self respect. In this article, she spells out the argument, by showing that an unconditional basic income maximizes the distribution of income and wealth understood as a social basis of self-respect. The most important objection to this argument available to Rawlsians is that basic income violates the demands of reciprocity, where reciprocity in any scheme of distribution is a requirement of justice. McKinnon discusses

this objection at length, and argues that even if Rawlsians can make the objection successfully at a theoretical level (which is not clear), it is not sufficient to divest them of a commitment to basic income, given some practical considerations relating to a "participation income", which would then provide in theory a superior alternative to basic income.

MOFFITT, Robert. "The Negative Income Tax and the Evolution of U.S. Welfare Policy", NBER Working Paper No. W9751, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2003, Available from http://papers.ssrn.com/paper.taf?abstract_id=414249 (Author's address: Johns Hopkins University Department of Economics, 3400 Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218-2685, USA [Mailto:moffitt@jhu.edu](mailto:moffitt@jhu.edu))

The negative income tax proposed by Milton Friedman represents one of the fundamental ideas of modern welfare policy. However, the academic literature has raised two difficulties with it, one challenging its purported work incentives and the other suggesting the possible superiority of work requirements. In addition, work requirement approaches have gained ground in actual U.S. welfare policy over the last 30 years and the number of different programs has proliferated, another development counter to the negative income tax. On the other hand, the Earned Income Tax Credit has produced a negative-income-tax-like program on a vast scale.

SEEKINGS & al., *Welfare Reform in South Africa*, special issue of *Social Dynamics* (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa, cmcbride@humanities.uct.ac.za) (Coordinator's e-mail: JSEEKING@commerce.uct.ac.za)

This rich contribution to the debate on the future of South Africa's welfare state includes articles by Jeremy Seekings ("The broader importance of welfare reform in South Africa", Servaas van der Berg and Caryn Bredenkamp ("Devising social security interventions for maximum poverty impact"), Michael Samson ("The social, economic and fiscal impact of comprehensive social security reform for South Africa"), Pieter le Roux ("Financing a universal income grant in South Africa"), Teresa Guthrie ("Family social security benefits in South Africa"); Steve Wamhoff and Sandra Burman ("Parental maintenance for children: how the private maintenance system might be improved"); Francie Lund ("Social security and the changing labour market: access for non-standard and informal workers in South Africa"); and Nicoli Nattrass ("Should youth unemployment be targeted as part of a comprehensive welfare policy in South Africa?").

SHAPIRO, Daniel. 2002. 'Egalitarianism and Welfare-State Redistribution'. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred Miller & Jeffrey Paul (eds.) *Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-35. ISBN 0-521-00535-3

This challenging essay reviews arguments advanced by Left-leaning

political philosophers and policy analysts about the shape welfare assistance should take: private or state-organised, and conditional or unconditional. After a systematic discussion of contemporary liberal-egalitarianism, Shapiro argues that egalitarians might prefer state welfare over private charity, but that this preference is not demanded by egalitarian doctrine. Moreover, egalitarians must support conditional aid over unconditional aid as a matter of egalitarian justice. The main reason is that "only the former helps to reveal whether a recipient is willing to take responsibility for his future, and egalitarians should view taking responsibility as essential for enabling victims of brute bad luck to get their lives under their control" (p.34). Shapiro's essay does not discuss basic income directly, but it contains ample material for basic income supporters who argue in favour of unconditional aid from an egalitarian point of view to engage with.

VAN PARIJS, Philippe. "Basic Income versus Stakeholder Grants. Some afterthoughts on how best to reinvent distribution", Université catholique de Louvain: Chaire Hoover d'éthique économique et sociale, DOCH 109, May 2003, 7p., forthcoming in *Redesigning Distribution: Basic income and Stakeholder Grants as Designs for a more Egalitarian Capitalism* (E.O. Wright ed.), London & New York: Verso ("Real Utopias").

In May 2002, Erik O. Wright, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin organised a conference in Madison around two background papers: an updated version of Philippe Van Parijs's synthetic presentation and defence of basic income prepared for BIEN's 2000 Berlin congress and a defence of stakeholders grants against basic income by Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott (Yale Law School). Participants in the meeting included the three authors and a number of other major contributors to the debate on basic income and stakeholders grants, such as Julian Le Grand, Carole Pateman, Guy Standing, Stuart White and Karl Widerquist. The two background papers and a number of other contributions will form a special issue of the journal *Politics and Society*. A more comprehensive volume will subsequently be published in Erik Wright's "Real Utopias" series, with concluding comments by Ackerman & Alstott and by Van Parijs. The latter's concluding comment can be downloaded from <http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/Publications/dochs.htm>.

WHITE, Stuart. *The Civic Minimum: On the Rights and Obligations of Economic Citizenship*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 200p., ISBN, 0-19-829505-7, <http://www.oup-usa.org/isbn/0198295057.html>
Oxford political theorist Stuart White is one of the most prominent critics of basic income on the ground that it fails to satisfy the demands of reciprocity. *The Civic Minimum* provides a book-length statement of White's ideas, in which the author both extends and modifies his earlier views on the desirability of an unconditional basic income. It is bound to become a major new reference work in the ethical discussion on basic income and its close cousins.

The first part of the book discusses the theory of justice underlying White's challenge to basic income - "justice as fair reciprocity". Following broadly liberal-egalitarian lines, White insists that a plausible theory of justice should give priority to the fair-dues principle of reciprocity. Fair-dues reciprocity requires that "those who claim the generous share of the social product available to them under [sufficiently just] institutions have an obligation to make a decent productive contribution, suitably proportioned and fitting to ability and circumstances, to the community in return" (p. 59). But even where institutions are not sufficiently just, White argues reciprocity still demands that citizens meet a basic work expectation: "a minimum number of hours and years of paid employment, adjusted for specific care work responsibilities" (p. 124).

The second part of the book is devoted to comparing three broad institutional schemes in relation to the fair-dues principle of reciprocity. The first scheme is that of welfare contractualism, better known as "workfare" in the US or "welfare-to-work" in the UK. A prime feature of a contractualist welfare scheme is the use of a work test to determine eligibility for welfare. A work test seems a straightforward requirement of justice as fair reciprocity, but White warns that important qualifications arise because of the stringent demand that such a test be applied equitably. This often requires more state intervention to address existing background inequalities of opportunity than proponents of workfare are willing to grant.

Next, White discusses the radical alternative of an unconditional basic income (UBI) in which he presents his well-known critique of Philippe Van Parijs's real-libertarian justification of basic income. White thinks arguments rooted in job assets, a common technological inheritance or land rights fail to provide an adequate justification within justice as fair reciprocity largely because they permit free-riding. However, UBI also has plausible and important reciprocity-enhancing consequences - creating employment opportunities, reducing domestic or market exploitation, or providing a residual safeguard against market vulnerabilities, and so on - that White is keen to endorse. How should we go about ensuring the positive reciprocity effects of UBI while simultaneously restricting its capacity for free-riding? White explores alternatives to the full unconditional form of BI: republican basic income (a scheme that is based on Atkinson's Participation Income), targeted basic income, and a time-limited basic income. He ends up supporting the idea of a two-tier income support system, combining a time-limited unconditional component with a work-tested conditional component.

Finally, White discusses a third institutional scheme: basic capital grants. Capital grants are usually conceived as substantial endowments from public funds that take the form of a one-off payment (as in the Ackerman/Alstott or Nissan/LeGrand proposals) but could feasibly also take the form, for example, of flexible lifetime credits. White offers a substantial overview of arguments in favour of capital grants, but his main reason for endorsing them is easy to spot: once tied in with restrictions on what can be done with one's grant, it is easy to limit capital grants to the

sort of productive participation that justice as fair reciprocity demands. One-off endowments, unlike a regular income stream, arguably have a close connection to the ethics of levelling the economic playing field in order that economic agents reap the benefits of their productive activities without running the risk of either being exploited by free-riders or themselves turning into exploiters of the disadvantaged. Whether capital grants are in fact able to deliver on this goal remains to be seen, but Stuart White certainly presents a case in their favour that needs to be taken seriously.

FRENCH

CARON, Anita ed., *L'Allocation d'existence: quelques propositions québécoises*, Université du Québec à Montréal: Institut de recherches et d'études féministes (iref@uqam.ca, <http://www.unites.uqam.ca/iref>), 2003. ISBN : 2-922045-16-1 CND\$ 8.

This set of fourteen "files" constitutes a systematic discussion of a number of basic income and related proposals made in the context of the province of Québec by François Blais, Michel Bernard, Michel Chartrand and others. It is based on a workshop devoted to the economic security of women organised at the Université Laval (Québec City) in October 2002. The contributors include Nadine Goudreault (Relais-Femmes), Lucie Lamarche (UQAM, Montréal), Marguerite Mendell (Concordia University, Montréal), Sylvie Morel and Francine Saillant (Université Laval, Québec), Nicole Thivierge (UQAR, Rimouski), Marielle Tremblay (UQAC, Chicoutimi) and Louise Brossard (UQAM, Montréal).

GERMAN

WOHLGENANT, Lieselotte ed., *Grundeinkommen. Soziale Innovation für die Welt des 21. Jahrhunderts*, Dossier 03/2003, Katholische Sozialakademie Oesterreichs (Schottenring 35/DG, 1010 Wien, Austria, <http://www.ksoe.at>, margit.appel@ksoe.at), 2003, 34p., EUR 4,36.

A new major contribution to the German-language literature on basic income at the initiative of the Vienna-based "Catholic Social Academy", which co-hosted BIEN's 1996 BIEN congress. Between an introduction by Dr Lieselotte Wohlgenannt (co-author of two books on the subject and driving force behind the project) and reports on the basic income debates in South Africa (by Douglas Tilton), Alaska (by Scott Goldsmith) and Ireland (by Brigid Reynolds), it includes substantive articles by Klagenfurt University lecturer Erich Kitzmüller (on "the next step to the common good"), Vienna University lecturer Manfred Füllsack (on "basic income for knowledge workers"), Vienna Technical University lecturer Christian Fuchs (on why "globalization needs basic income"), Humboldt University professor Claus Offe (on "wasteful need targetting: a plea for basic income") and Max Planck Institut researcher Roswitha Pioch (on "immigration, citizenship and guaranteed income in Europe").

ITALIAN

ARNSPERGER, Christian & VAN PARIJS, Philippe. *Quanta diseguaglianza possiamo accettare? Etica economica e sociale*. Introduzione di Maurizio FERRERA, Bologna: Il Mulino ("Intersezioni"), 2003, 134p, EUR 10.50, ISBN 88 15 09383 4.

Like its French and Spanish predecessors (*Ethique économique et sociale*, La Découverte, 2000 & 2003; *Etica economica y social. Teorías de la sociedad justa*, Paidós 2000) and its Brazilian and Portuguese successors (São Paulo: Loyola and Porto: Afrontamento, forthcoming), this little book is primarily meant as a didactic and illustrated introduction to the current state of discussion in economic and social ethics. However, to illustrate the divergent variants of the liberal-egalitarian conception of social justice, it devotes a whole section to "Justice and Work", in which the ethical discussion of an unconditional basic income is presented on this broader background. Moreover, this Italian version is substantively introduced by Maurizio's FERRERA ("Per un'etica sociale: Diseguaglianze giuste, comportamenti retti", pp. VII-XXVI), one of Europe's most respected social policy specialists, who emphasises the crucial importance of explicit ethical thinking in the public debate on the future of the welfare state.

SPANISH

PINTO, Ramiro, *Los Fundamentos de la renta básica y la perestroika del capitalismo. Teoría alternativa sobre economía política en la sociedad tecnológica y del bienestar*, León (Spain: Entitema, 2003, 820p. (author's address: ARENCI, Apartado de correos 587

León, Spain, contact address: jose.m.sanchez <jose.m.sanchez@emailpersonal.com>)

A massive book on "the foundations of basic income and the predtroika of capitalism", by one of the founding members of Spain's green movement and chairman of the pro-basic income group "Asociación Renta Ciudadana" (ARENCI).

URIBARRI, Inaki & al., *La Renta Básica*. II Simposio de la Renta Básica en Gasteiz, thematic dossier in *Hika* (Peña y Goñi, 13 1º 2002 Donostia, Spain, hikadon@teleline.es) 140, 2003, pp. 22-37.

This special issue of the Basque review *Hika* includes several papers presented at the II Conference of the Basic Income Spanish Network (Red Renta Básica) that took place on Vitoria-Gasteiz 13-14 December, 2002. David Casassas summarizes the two main themes studied at the meeting: the "Integration Income" schemes that exist in Spain and the proposal of a basic income as a solution to the problems of social assistance. Iñaki Uribarri points out the negative effects of the Integration Incomes, as reflected in the increase of poverty in the last ten years. Alex Henares stresses three defects of these programs: they are insufficiently funded, they are instruments of control over poor people and the sanctions are

arbitrary. Noguera presents the advantages of basic income over a right to work guaranteed by the State, for example that the latter is more expensive and that there is no good way of distributing unpleasant jobs. In the same vein, Izaskun de la Fuente argues that a basic income would have positive consequences for women, who are most affected by poverty. The dossier ends with two concrete proposals of basic income. The first one is presented by the Basque Trade Union ESK to the Basque Country and Navarra; the second one, defended by Rafael Pinilla, covers all the regions of Spain. Pinilla defends an individual basic income with a complement of household-sensitive basic income to take economies of scale and with some differentiation according to the cost of living in the various regions of Spain.

SWEDISH

JANSON Per. *Den huvudlösa idén: Medborgarlön, välfärdspolitik och en blockerad debatt* [A Brainless Idea - Basic Income, Welfare Policy and a Blocked Debate], Arkiv (Box 1559, SE-221 01 Lund, Sweden, www.arkiv.nu), 2003, ISBN 91-7924-161-1. (Author's address: "Per Janson" <perj@sister.nu> or Per.Janson@svet.lu.se)

Basic income has been widely discussed in academic circles. But it has not really reached the formal political agenda. Thus, an editorial in one of Sweden's main newspapers recently called it a "brainless idea". The main aim of this book is to discuss why basic income is not on the political agenda, with Sweden as the focus of the discussion. On a general theoretical level the discussion deals with the question of which policy proposals reach the formal political agenda. An obvious reason for not making it onto the formal political agenda is that a policy proposal is bad. A policy proposal is good if it is normatively and empirically possible. Even if a policy proposal is good it does not mean that the proposal should be implemented; but it prescribes that it should be taken seriously in the political debate, or in other words that it deserves its place on the formal political agenda. A second reason is that there are groups in society with strong power resources that oppose changes or that those in favour of change have weak power resources. A third reason is that the policy proposal is not linked to an established political problem. A fourth and final reason is that the proposal does not fit in a political possibility frame. The political possibility frame is determined by the main aims of the present policy. A policy proposal that does not fit within the political possibility frame can be blocked out of the political debate. None of the explanations exclude each other. When discussing the normative and empirical arguments for and against basic income it is clear that there are some serious criticisms against the idea, but none of them can be said to dismiss basic income as a bad policy proposal. It appears then that the reason why basic income is not on the formal political agenda cannot be explained by the fact that it is a bad policy proposal. There are also few signs of actors using their power to try to stop the proposal. However, most actors that support basic income have weak power resources and

this explanation cannot be completely ignored. One more significant explanation is that basic income has not been tied to an accepted political problem. But, the most apparent explanation is that the proposal is blocked in the political debate. Basic income clearly breaks with the policy core and most reactions against the proposal in the Swedish public debate are structured from existing policy. Those who argue against basic income rarely discuss the pros and cons of the proposal. Instead, without further discussion the opponents merely state that it is a bad proposal. Other public national debates about basic income show the same pattern.

5. ABOUT BIEN

BIEN's Executive Committee

Ilona Ostner (iostner@gwdg.de), co-chair
Guy Standing (guystanding@compuserve.com), co-chair
Alexander de Roo MEP (aderoo@europarl.eu.int), treasurer
Claus Offe (coffe@sowi.hu-berlin.de), research coordinator
Philippe Van Parijs (vanparijs@etes.ucl.ac.be), secretary, with support from Yannick Vanderborght (vanderborght@etes.ucl.ac.be)
Jurgen De Wispelaere (j.de-wispelaere@lse.ac.uk), BIENOnline web manager
Ingrid Van Niekerk (ivanniekerk@epri.org.za), overseas officer
David Casassas (casassas@eco.ub.es), 2004 conference organiser

Honorary Committee Members

Edwin Morley-Fletcher (m-fletcher@cnel.it)
Robert J. van der Veen (vanderveen@warwick.ac.uk)
Walter Van Trier (Walter.VanTrier@hiva.kuleuven.ac.be)
Steven Quilley (steve.quilley@ucd.ie)

Recognised National Networks

IRELAND - BIEN Ireland
Coordinator: John Baker
Equality Studies Centre
University College Dublin
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland
Tel.: +353-1-716 8365
Fax: +353-1-716 1171
E-mail: John.Baker@ucd.ie

NETHERLANDS - Vereniging Basinkomen
Coordinator: Grietje Lof
Elisabeth Wolffstraat 96-B
1053 TX Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Tel.: +31-020-6852712

E-mail: info@basisinkomen.nl
Website : www.basisinkomen.nl

SWITZERLAND - BIEN Switzerland
President: Andras November
E-mail: andras.november@iued.unige.ch
Website: www.makessense.ch/basicincome/

SPAIN - Red Renta Basica
President: Daniel Raventos
Universitat de Barcelona
Departament de Teoria Sociologica
Avda. Diagonal 690, 08034 Barcelona, Spain
Tel.: +34.93.402.90.59
Fax: +34.93.322.65.54
E-mail: presidencia@redrentabasica.org
Website: www.redrentabasica.org

UK - Citizen's Income Study Centre
Director: Malcolm Torry
Citizens Income Trust, P.O. Box 26586,
London SE3 7WY, United Kingdom.
Tel.: 44-20-8305 1222
Fax: 44-20-8305 9944
E-mail: info@citizensincome.org
Website: www.citizensincome.org

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