

The feasibility of a Citizen's Basic Income from a **socialist** perspective



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Initial premise

- Basic Income is a mechanism or technique for income distribution: a tool, not a silver bullet.
- Its feasibility, functionality and efficacy are wholly dependent on the context **in** which, and the terms **upon** which, it is implemented.

Compatibility with socialist principles

- From each according to her ability; to each according to her needs.
- Detaching subsistence needs from (inherently exploitative) wage labour.
- Marx's concepts of 'radical human need' and 'species being': the meaning of 'work'.
- Equality of human fulfilment.

The limitations of a CBI under capitalism

- So long as wage levels and labour conditions are governed by market forces a CBI will not eliminate income inequality.
- So long as prices and the distribution of goods are governed by market forces a CBI will not achieve equality of living standards or substantive equality of opportunity.
- Under certain conditions, a CBI could fuel inequalities.

The strategic potential of a CBI

- As a **component** of an anti-capitalist struggle (alongside e.g. reductions in working hours, wage regulation, and the defence/promotion of public services).
- As a means to promote citizen **solidarity** and common identity/recognition.
- The scope for compromise/incremental improvement to existing social security provision.