

# **BASIC INCOME**

## **Newsletter of the Basic Income European Network**

**N°13**

**May 1992**

### **Beyond the Welfare State**

The next BIEN conference will be held at the University of Paris Saint-Maur on 18-19 September. Registration forms will be sent shortly. Further details and provisional programme on pages 3-4.

### **Citizenship income and the labour market**

The ILO has agreed to host and sponsor a conference to be organized by BIEN in Geneva in late 1992 or early 1993. Further details in the next issue.

### **A new medium for a new idea**

The first video on basic income has been produced by the Basic Income Research Group. It is reviewed on page 7.

### **European Parliament: Basic income proved too radical**

After a hearing held in February, Green MEP Birgit Cramon Daiber has been asked by the EP's Social Affairs Committee to go back to a more traditional concept of guaranteed income. See the report on page 5.

## CONTENTS

### OUR NETWORK

- 2 The Executive Committee
- 2 The Editorial Board
- 3 The Paris conference
- 12 How to join BIEN
- 12 Membership form

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### HOW YOU CAN HELP

**1. Keep us informed.** Send promptly to the editor any news, announcement, book, pamphlet, working paper, etc. that may interest other people in the network.

**Deadline for the next issue: 1 August 1992.**

**2. Circulate the Newsletter.** BIEN members can ask for back issues and additional copies, which will be sent free of charge.

**3. Recruit new members** by asking interested people to fill in and return the form on page 12.

### THE EDITORIAL BOARD

- **Assistant editor:**

### 5 EVENTS

### 6 PUBLICATIONS

- 6 Dutch
- 7 English
- 10 French
- 11 German

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**BEYOND THE WELFARE STATE/  
AU DELÀ DU R.M.I  
Paris, 18-19 September 1992  
Fourth international conference of the Basic Income European Network**

**Focus.** French experts and politicians are in the process of evaluating the *revenu minimum d'insertion* (R.M.I.), a comprehensive (means- and work-tested) guaranteed minimum income scheme set up in 1988 on the initiative of Michel Rocard's government. This is the right time to bring the European discussion on basic income to the French capital. The specific focus of this conference will therefore be on how the difficulties generated by existing welfare state provisions (along RMI lines) call for the introduction of a basic income, and on the feasibility of basic income proposals, whether on a national or supranational scale.

**The Organizing Committee.** The practical organization of the conference has been entrusted to the Association pour l'Introduction d'un Revenu d'Existence (Association for the introduction of an existence income or AIRE), with the collaboration of several other Paris-based associations including Futuribles, the Syndicat des chômeurs, the Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales (MAUSS), La Grande Relève, Europe 99 and Transversales Science/Culture. The Organizing Committee consists of Yoland Bresson (coordinator), Philippe Riché (treasurer), Pierre Lavagne and Claude Raignier-Howard for AIRE, and Philippe Van Parijs and Walter Van Trier for BIEN.

**Place:** Université de Paris/ St Maur, 58 Avenue Didier, 94210 La Varenne Saint-Hilaire (Tube line: RER ligne A; Station: La Varenne Chennevières, about 50 min. from central Paris).

**Working languages:** English and French with simultaneous translation.

**Conference fee:** FF 350 including conference papers and meals. Should fund raising for the conference prove particularly successful, some contribution will be made towards covering the accommodation or travelling expenses of those who present a paper.

**Registration:** The registration form will be sent shortly to all BIEN members. It will also be obtainable from the conference secretariat: Mademoiselle H. Boussatha, Faculté des Sciences économiques et de gestion, Université de Paris/St Maur, 58 Avenue Didier, F-94210 La Varenne Saint-Hilaire, France Tél.: (33)(1) 49768098; Fax: (33)(1) 48852993.

**Call for papers:** Please look at the themes of the workshops listed below in the provisional programme. If you feel you have something new to contribute to any of them, something that should interest people from other European countries, then write as soon as possible to Professor Yoland Bresson at the above address. The papers will have to reach the conference secretariat no later than 31 August, so that they can be circulated to all participants. Oral presentations must not exceed 15 minutes.

**Call for books:** Two new paperbacks on basic income will be available at the conference: one in French (*Garantir le revenu. Une des solutions à l'exclusion*, G. Gantelet & J.P. Maréchal eds., Paris: Transversales) and one in English (*Arguing for Basic Income. Ethical foundations for a radical reform*, P. Van Parijs ed., London: Verso). Do bring along copies of relevant books and other publications in any European language, so that they can be put on sale during coffee breaks.

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**

**FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 1992**

9 am: Registration

10 am: Welcoming of participants, by Yoland BRESSON , Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Université de Paris/ Saint Maur.

TOPIC 1: THE RELEVANCE OF BASIC INCOME IN TODAY'S WORLD

10 am: Plenary session

Two lectures (one in English, one in French)

11am: Coffee break

11.30 am: Panel discussion with a number of prominent French and foreign politico-intellectual personalities.

1 pm: Lunch

TOPIC 2: THE FEASIBILITY OF BASIC INCOME AND THE OBSTACLES TO ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES AND IN THE EEC

2.15 pm: Plenary session

Two lectures (one in English, one in French)

3.15 pm: Coffee break

3.30 pm: Two or three parallel workshops (depending on the supply of papers) on concrete proposals relating to the introduction of a basic income

- in individual European countries;
- at EEC level (substitute for the Common Agricultural Policy, funding by energy taxes, component of the Social Charter ?);
- in Eastern Europe and in the Third World.

Evening: Reception at the Paris City Hall.

**SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 1992**

TOPIC 3: THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF BASIC INCOME AND THE ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING GUARANTEED MINIMUM SCHEMES

9.15 am: Plenary session

Two lectures (one in English, one in French)

10.15 am: Coffee break

10.45 am: Two parallel workshops on

- Historical roots and theoretical foundations
- The assessment of the RMI and similar guaranteed minimum schemes in other countries, in relation to basic income.

1 pm: Lunch

TOPIC 4: WHAT SHOULD BE PROPOSED ? AT WHAT LEVEL ? AT WHAT PACE ?

2.15 pm: Plenary session

General discussion opened by

- brief reports of relevant facts or suggestions that emerge from the workshops;
- brief prepared statements by some participants

4.30 pm: Concluding speeches by the chairmen of BIEN and AIRE

5 pm: Drink offered by the University of Paris/ Saint Maur

6 pm: BIEN business meeting

## EVENTS

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
HEARING ON GUARANTEED INCOME  
(BRUSSELS, 25-26 FEBRUARY 1992)**

In October 1991 (see *BI* 12:3), the Committee for Social Affairs of the European Parliament adopted a report on social security and income support submitted by Birgit Cramon Daiber, a German Green member of the European Parliament. In that report, a citizenship-based, individual guaranteed income, means-tested but otherwise unconditional and pitched at about 40% of average disposable income in the country, was the main institutional set-up with which several member states—those enjoying an elaborate social security system—were urged to experiment. Cramon Daiber's proposals met with resistance at a plenary session in November 1991, both from the right and the left, and the report was sent back to the Committee for revision. In February 1992 the Committee held a hearing during which various experts on income support systems were asked to assess the Cramon Daiber proposal. As the Committee's summary of the hearing puts it, Cramon Daiber's proposal met with opposition because it "dealt with 'basic income' or 'civic income' and it was clear that it could not be approved in plenary session." Cramon Daiber was asked to substantially revise her proposal by insisting less on a fundamental *reform* of social security systems—which, the Committee claims, would be necessary to implement basic income—and more on income support as a *supplement* to existing social security. In this perspective, basic income is viewed as both unrealistic and undesirable. The proposal should moreover give up the 40% clause in order to give each member state more freedom, and replace the individual by the household as the relevant unit. Once these changes are

made, the Cramon Daiber report will have to be re-examined before being submitted to the plenary session in May. (For further information: Alexander de Roo, Greens in EP, European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels.)

**BEYOND UNEMPLOYMENT:  
GOOD WORK  
AND BASIC INCOME FOR ALL  
(CHOLSEY, 11 JULY 1992)**

The Other Economic Summit (TOES) is organizing a seminar on new approaches to work and income distribution on July 11 in Cholsey, Oxfordshire. Such alternatives include "ownwork" and "basic incomes." What will these mean for society as a whole? What will they mean for ourselves and the places where we live? Attendance is limited to twenty participants, with a booking fee of £5 per place. A booking form and additional information can be obtained from Alison Pritchard, The Old Bakehouse, Cholsey, Oxon OX10 9NU, Great Britain, Phone: (44)(491)652346.

**SOCIAL SECURITY:  
FIFTY YEARS AFTER BEVERIDGE  
(YORK, 27-30 SEPTEMBER 1992)**

The European Institute of Social Security is organizing its annual colloquium at the University of York from 27 to 30 September, 1992 on the theme "Social Security: Fifty Years After Beveridge." Registration forms and information booklets can be obtained from: Beveridge, Room G104, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD, Phone: (44)(904)433483; Fax:(44)(904)433475.

## PUBLICATIONS

### DUTCH

**BURGERSCHAP: ARBEIDSMARKTBELEID EN BASISINKOMEN**, special issue of *Tijdschrift voor Arbeid en Bewustzijn* (Uitgeverij van Arkel, Postbus 13094, NL-3507 LB Utrecht), November 1991, Dfl. 12.50.

This is not the first time that the "Journal for Work and Awareness" has lent its pages to a discussion on basic income. Part of this special issue on "Citizenship: labour market policy and basic income" echoes the current discussion inside the Green Left Party (with contributions by Paul Rosenmöller and Wilhelm Dercksen; see also our review of the *Nieuwsbrief Basisinkomen* below). It also includes translations of a liberal argument for basic income by Oxford sociologist and former European Commissioner Ralf Dahrendorf (reflecting his preference for "claims which create opportunities" over "claims which prescribe a specific way of life," and hence "for a guaranteed basic income over child benefits, housing subsidies and social security benefits which involve a means test") and of a "left-libertarian" or "post-industrial left" argument by BIEN's first chairman, German political scientist Claus Offe (in which security and autonomy play a central role). It ends with a revised version of Jola Jakson and Robert van der Veen's paper on the ethical foundations of basic income presented at the 1991 yearly meeting of the Dutch Basic Income Network (see *BI 11:4*).

(Address: see above.)

**NIEMAND AAN DE KANT**, Report of the Welfare State Commission, Partij van de Arbeid, Amsterdam, January 1992, 46p.

The so-called Wolfson Commission of the Dutch Labour Party (currently in power, jointly with the Christian Democrats) produced last January a much discussed report on the future of the Dutch Welfare State. Its keywords are "Activating" (people must be encouraged and enabled to participate), "Broad" (not targeted to the weakest) and "Controlable." The report addresses at some length the question of whether room should be made for a basic income. After a balanced overview of the

main pros and cons, here comes the decisive passage, worth quoting extensively: "The most important objection to basic income, in the Commission's eyes, is that it breaks the reciprocity relation that is contained in solidarity. By uncoupling the right to income and the duty to accept work, one undermines the legitimacy of the social security system. Why would you, as a worker, keep contributing to the funding of this system, if others are not required to do all they can to reduce to a minimum their claims on social security? On the basis of these objections, the Commission rejects the introduction of a basic income—however interesting and attractive it may be as a utopia. In a conception in which the promotion of labour force participation, the reestablishment of the balance between rights and duties in the solidarity relationship and, more generally the enhancement of the legitimacy of the social security system are in central position, the objections against basic income weigh significantly more than its advantages." Hence, the general structure of the present welfare state must remain unchanged. In particular, only those who are unable to earn a sufficient income through their work are entitled to social benefits.

(The report—in Dutch—can be obtained by phoning the PvdA (Dutch Labour Party), (31)(20)5512155.)

**NIEUWSBRIEF BASISINKOMEN** n°1, March 1992, 24p., ISSN 0924-3038.

The newsletter of the Dutch basic Income Network (Werkplaats basisinkomen) has now shed its initial name ("Het werkt niet meer," i.e., "it no longer works"), judged too negative, and continues, with renewed enthusiasm, to echo debates and developments around basic income in the Netherlands. This issue informs the reader about an interesting meeting held in Utrecht in November on whether a basic income would enable the market to work better (Robert van der Veen) and/or would free us from subjection to its rule (Anton Nigten). It reports on the ongoing debate within the "Green Left party": four out of its six Members of Parliament have signed an

appeal in favour of making basic income party policy, and a fifth one has declared herself in favour of a partial basic income. In addition, the newsletter reviews various recent Dutch publications and newspaper articles.

(Address: Werkplaats, Herman Heijermansweg 20, NL-1077 WL Amsterdam.)

**VAN BERKEL, Rik & HINDRIKS, Theo.** *Uitkeringsgerechtigden en Vakbeweging. Over de modernisering van het arbeidsbestel*, Doctoral thesis, Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht, November 1991, 346p., ISBN 90-6224-221-9.

Over the years, the proportion of claimants among Dutch Trade Union members has been growing. But are their views adequately represented by the Trade Union movement, in particular as regards their conceptions of work and income? This is what the authors of this doctoral dissertation submitted at Utrecht University are trying to find out, by reviewing the relevant policies of the main Dutch Trade Union Federation (FNV) and by conducting interviews with a sample of claimants affiliated to this Federation. In the process, they devote several sections to

basic income. Among the claimants they interviewed 46% were in favour of basic income, 28% against and 22% did not know. The proportion of those in favour among those with an opinion was far higher among the unemployed they interviewed (nearly 90%) than among the pensioners (slightly over 50%). This may be one indication of the emergence of a new, less work-oriented conception, the authors point out, even though most of those in favour of basic income also emphasize the importance of a right to work. In an interview with the Trade Union Journal *FNV Magazine*, the authors sum up their message: "How do you organize people's participation in various forms of paid and unpaid work? For example with a basic income. This is how you get people out of a dependent position. They then have a better control over their own time. (...) With a basic income too people will want to work. This is not something we are afraid of."

(Authors' address: Vakgroep Algemene Sociale Wetenschappen, Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, Heidelberglaan 2/13, NL-3504 CS Utrecht.)

## ENGLISH

**ASPECTS OF BASIC INCOME**, A series of factsheets from the Basic Income Research Group (BIRG, 102 Pepys Road, GB-London SE14 5SG), 1992.

The Basic Income Research Group has recently started publishing a handy series of factsheets about various aspects of basic income. Each sheet answers a certain number of questions and occasionally provides helpful references for those wishing to do further reading. The following factsheets can be obtained (free of charge, but with a contribution to postage costs): No.1: What is basic income?; no.2: The Basic Income Research Group; no. 3: Paying for basic income; no. 4: The history; no. 5: Basic income and the labour market. There are more to come. This is a welcome idea for disseminating ideas on basic income in a short and accessible form. (Address: BIRG, see above.)

**BASIC INCOME**. A video from the Basic Income Research Group (BIRG, 102 Pepys Road, GB-London SE14 5SG), 1992, 11 minutes.

Old books on basic income keep being discovered. But one can be pretty sure that this is and will remain the first video that presents the idea. This well-made accessible 11-minute presentation uses interviews—with an old-age pensioner, a single mother, an unemployed youth—to explain what can make the idea attractive to claimants in particular—less bureaucracy, less insecurity, more real possibilities for getting back to work. This alternates with brief interventions by Hermione Parker, author of *Instead of the Dole*, who persuasively asserts that funding would be no problem (a little chart would have helped at that stage), and Ralf Dahrendorf, Warden of St Anthony's College (Oxford), who imposingly advocates basic income as a right of citizenship, a central component of the ideal of a truly civil society. This is a great start for basic income on video. A European version would be most welcome. (Address: BIRG, see above.)

**BIRG BULLETIN**, no. 14, February 1992  
(Basic Income Research Group, 102 Pepys

Road, GB-London SE14 5SG), 32p., £3.00, ISSN 0954-8246.

To open this densely packed issue, Michael Meacher of the British Labour Party and Paddy Ashdown of the Liberal Democrats present their views about basic income (BI). According to Meacher, a full BI would be too costly while a partial one would not be sufficient to dispense with existing social security. In addition, he fears that BI could become "a payment for passivity." Ashdown, on the contrary, feels that BI "is the best form of targeting, because it goes directly to where it is needed." After defending BI against various objections, he concludes that BI "is a reform whose time has come." Jean-Yves Duclos of the London School of Economics examines the effects of BI on wealth creation by estimating the net income of a single-earner family under the current system and under BI. He concludes, among other things, that BI would significantly enhance labour market opportunities. Nutritionists Michael Nelson and Anne-Marie Mayer of King's College (London) offer a study of British food budgets aimed at stimulating discussion about the "adequate" level of BI. They estimate that a "modest-but-adequate" diet for a two-child family would require about £65 per week. Sylke Nissen (Institut für Sozialforschung, Hamburg) addresses the problem of the "disastrous alliance between employees and polluting employers" in unemployment-ridden eastern European states. Implementing ecological policies could worsen unemployment in such a context, and so the main objective should be "to loosen the ties between individual workers and their jobs"—a purpose for which BI seems well suited. In an article about communications strategy, David Smith (Director of DVL Smith & Associates) explains that "a critical mass [of support for BI] clearly does not exist in the wider community," because of insufficient awareness rather than because of clear negative opinions; he therefore recommends to delay any popularity assessment based on opinion polls. In a contribution to the history of social security, Malcolm Torry (BIRG's Director) examines the roots of the welfare state and argues that William Beveridge and William Temple were not far from advocating a BI, but that in the end they were unwilling "to advocate social change which was not substantially a rearrangement of the *status quo*."

(Address: BIRG, see above.)

**DESAI, Meghnad. "Why not guarantee a basic income?,"** *Tribune*, 20 July 1991.

A short but effective plea for basic income by a renowned LSE economist, Labour member of the House of Lords and BIRG trustee. An unconditional basic income, Desai argues, should become a central element of the British Labour Party's platform. By being instituted as a citizenship right, it would help to "eliminate poverty and remove the shame of claiming" and would progressively become seen as a legitimate "unearned income for unpaid work." Desai estimates that basic income could replace about 70% of current social security transfers. In passing, he also acknowledges the efforts made by BIEN, BIRG and other basic income associations to promote discussion at the British and European levels.

(Address: London School of Economics, Department of Economics, Houghton Street, GB-London WC2A 2AE.)

**DOYAL, Len & GOUGH, Ian. *A Theory of Human Need*,** Basingstoke & London: Macmillan (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS, G.B.), 1991, 365p., ISBN 0-333-38325-7.

This ambitious book jointly written by a moral philosopher and a political economist aims to provide a coherent and usable non-relativist theory of human needs. In the last chapter, the authors show how their theory propels them "to a radical extension, plus a codification, of the citizenship-based welfare entitlements presently found in Western welfare states." This involves, in particular, a right to a sufficient minimum income, which in modern economies can be implemented in two main ways: by guaranteeing adequately paid jobs to all those who can and should work and social security income for others, or by providing basic income as of right to all citizens. After mentioning standard objections to both strategies, the authors conclude—rather vaguely—by insisting on "the compatibility of income and employment guarantees in a strategy to optimise need-satisfaction."

(Second author's address: University of Manchester, Department of Social Administration, Manchester M13 9PL, Great Britain.)

**ERMISCH, John. "European Integration and External Constraints on Social Policy: Is a Social Charter Necessary?,"** in *National*

*Institute Economic Review*, No. 136, May 1991, ISSN 0027-9501.

This study is not specifically concerned with basic income, but it is relevant to the question of whether BI should be thought about at a national or EEC level. According to the author, worker mobility within the EEC is, and will continue to be, only slightly responsive to real wage and social benefit differentials. Ermisch's claim concerning *sensitiveness to differences in benefit levels* rests on an analysis of inter-state mobility of single-parent claimants in the United States showing that even in a country whose population is much more mobile than in Europe, benefit differences exert little pressure on migration. The evidence mentioned in support of a very low *sensitiveness to after-tax real wages* comes from European data, mainly about migration inside Italy and the UK and from Ireland to the UK. Ermisch's conclusion is that member countries wishing to introduce higher benefits financed from payroll or income taxes and taxes are not prevented from doing so by the risk of attracting claimants or losing workers. Thus "social dumping" by each country in order to salvage competitiveness is not to be feared, and no supra-national organisation of social security is called for. "Member countries should be given autonomy in setting their social policies, including those involving redistribution. A Social Charter does not appear to be needed." The author's discussion is clear, useful and well-informed. But it misses out two important possibilities. One is that countries may wish to finance part of their benefits by taxing capital (in one way or another) rather than labour. The other is

that, even if funded exclusively out of labour income, benefits, especially if they are fairly unconditional, may nevertheless have a negative effect on profits because of reduced incentives to supply labour and, more important still, to supply effort. The threat, in both cases, is not that workers will move out or that claimants will move in, but that capital will move out to a stingier neighbouring country. This is at the root of the social dumping which the Social Charter is meant to prevent. It is also an essential part of the argument used by the Dutch government in 1985 to dismiss a partial basic income proposal for the Netherlands. These fears too may be unjustified. But Ermisch does not give us any reason to believe they are.

(Author's address: Department of Economics, University of Glasgow.)

**PARKER, Hermione. "Invest in the child and bank on the future", in *The Guardian*, 30 October 1991.**

In this succinct analysis of the British situation in childcare, Hermione Parker argues in favour of a "Citizens' Income" to replace existing income tax allowances. A Citizens' Income, she argues, would have great advantages for family life and especially for the way children are brought up in low-income social categories. It could not, however, fully cover the revenues lost by mothers who stay at home, so that in addition all work-related childcare should be made tax deductible.

(Author's address: c/o BIRG, 102 Pepys Road, GB-London SE14 5SG.)

## FRENCH

**BRESSON, Yoland. "Un avenir sans chômage", *Le Monde*, 20 November 1991.**

According to French economist Yoland Bresson, full employment policies are no longer adapted to highly automated industrial economies. Instead of maintaining the illusory hope that full employment of waged labour can be recovered, governments should concentrate on restructuring the income distribution system: "Let us stop talking about job creation. What is inevitable is a change in the distribution of income. (...) What has to be sought is no longer full employment, but rather full activity, which requires severing

the all too rigid link between income and employment." Drawing on his earlier work (see *BI* 12:10), Bresson argues in favour of an unconditional "existence income" based on a measure of "time value" instead of labour value. Wage income would then be a *voluntarily chosen* supplement, so that everyone would become free to allocate their time to various activities "and the very word unemployment [would] disappear".

(Author's address: Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion, 58 avenue Didier, F-94210 La Varenne Saint-Hilaire.)

**DE FOUCAULD, Jean-Baptiste.** "La montée des misérables", in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 February 1992.

How should solidarity be organised in our times of high unemployment? In this challenging interview, Jean-Baptiste de Foucauld, a former collaborator of Jacques Delors at the Finance Ministry and now Director of the French Commissariat Général au Plan, draws together some ideas about the problem of social exclusion. The solution he favours is "a new model of post-Taylorist competition" in which market imperatives go hand in hand with "a real effort toward social cohesion." Workers, de Foucauld argues, should be given better opportunities to perform non-market activities and launch solidary initiatives in order to choose more freely their working time and their income. What about a basic income? De Foucauld mentions it explicitly but rejects offhand the uncoupling of income and work it would involve. "After a generation or two, one would observe a dramatic drop in productivity and considerable collective impoverishment."

(Author's address: Commissariat Général au Plan, Paris.)

**GENELOT, Monique.** *Europe 99. Projet de civilisation. Synthèse de réflexions et propositions de l'Association "Europe 99"*, Paris: Europe 99 (226 Bd St Germain, F-

75007 Paris), 1992, ISBN 2-8506573-03, 88p., 75FF or 11 ECU.

Europe 99 is an association recently created in order to promote a European project which is not purely economic but incorporates ecological, social, and democratic concerns. It is chaired by socialist MEP Michel Hervé and its members include number of French associations such as Futuribles, Ecoropa or the Club Victor Hugo pour les Etats-Unis d'Europe, and many French intellectuals such as Edgar Morin, Albert Jacquard, René Passet or Jöel de Rosnay. This little book summarizes its analyses and proposals. Among the latter features the advent of a "distributive economy" (inspired by the work of Jacques Duboin), a first step towards which would consist in "an income guaranteed to every European citizen, paid without means test nor obligation to be looking for a job or prove that one is poor". It would need to be introduced step by step and would replace other social benefits whose payment is subjected to tests of various sorts. Europe 99 is now nearly exclusively French in membership and references but is keen to find new recruits throughout Europe. (Address of Europe 99: 226 Bd St Germain, F-75007 Paris, Phone: 33-1-47059035, Fax : 45559604.)

## GERMAN

**BÄCKER, Gerhard & STEFFEN, Johannes.** "Reichtum im Westen—Armut im Osten? Neue Gesellschaftsspaltungen machen soziale Mindestsicherung erforderlich", in *WSI-Mitteilungen*, 44. Jahrgang, 5/1991.

The authors are arguing in favour of a minimum income as a solution to the growing socio-political problems in eastern Germany.

**CARITAS SCHWEIZ.** *Existenzsicherndes Grundeinkommen?*, *Berichte*, 2/1991.

Eight articles representing the state of the discussion on guaranteed income in Switzerland.

(Editor's address: Thomas Mächler, Caritas Schweiz, Löwenstraße 3, CH—6002 Luzern.)

**VOBRUBA, Georg.** *Jenseits der sozialen Fragen*, Frankfurt am Main: Edition Suhrkamp, 1991, 172p., DM 12.00, ISBN 3-518-11699-1.

This little book is based on Georg Vobruba's past work on social policy. The basic idea is that social policy produces externalities which benefit even (and mainly) those who are not direct recipients. Social policy is mostly concerned with the citizen's material security of existence. This creates social stability and productive incentives which benefit all members of society. Vobruba's general approach sheds light on the advantages and drawbacks of basic income as one possible option for social policy. For instance, in the domain of ecological modernisation, social policy needs to disconnect work and income. "What should social policy look like in order to form the basis for ecological modernisation? Should we opt for 'tailored solutions' such as social plans, or for 'universalistic solutions' such as a guaranteed basic income?" No clear-cut answers are given here, but a comprehensive analytical framework is offered.

(Author's address: c/o Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, Mittelweg 36, D-2000 Hamburg 13.)

**WOLF, Jürgen. "Sozialstaat und Grundsicherung",** in *Leviathan. Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft*, Jahrgang 19, 3/1991, pp. 386-410, DM 22.00, ISSN 0340-0425.

In view of the growing problems of unemployment and social exclusion arising with German unification, Jürgen Wolf feels that "a social security system whose benefits are geared to the availability for work and which, apart from that, only provides social assistance, could break down in the face of such problems and may no longer be able to fulfill the duties of the social State." But basic income, he argues, may not be the best solution. He presents several objections commonly found in the literature which make "a transition to such a system unrealistic in the short and medium term" and can even "reinforce a sceptical attitude toward its desirability in the long term." The first objection is that basic income only forces the State to

intervene in the fixation of an existence minimum, leaving all other distributive mechanisms to the market; whether the drop in tax pressure alone can encourage investment and savings is highly questionable. Second, basic income institutes an unpopular "right not to work." Third, it contributes to creating low-income groups and to reinforcing the segmentation of the labour market. Fourth, it needs economic growth because it is financed by taxes, but at the same time it is part of a wider scheme aiming at reducing growth to focus on qualitative and ecological concerns. Fifth, it cannot be accurately targeted and is therefore socially unjust. Finally, it sometimes appears as a "a bribe to silence the women who are evicted from the labour market." Because of all these criticisms, "an effort to improve existing social security systems which aim at tightening the social safety net and relieving poverty" may be more appropriate than trying to completely overturn these systems in order to introduce a basic income.

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