

# **BASIC INCOME**

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

**N°11**

**Summer 1991**

### **Two BIEN conferences in 1992 ?**

Plans are being made for one event in Paris in the Spring and another in Geneva in the Autumn. See p. 3 for further details and a call for papers.

### **The first French manifesto for basic income**

has just been published in the form of a collective volume by the members of the "Association pour l'Introduction du Revenu d'Existence." It is reviewed on p. 10.

### **"I have put my hope on minorities who are able to think. We can lose. We must not give up."**

Sociologist Sir Ralf Dahrendorf restates his plea for truly universal economic citizenship rights in an interview just published by a Dutch newspaper. See p. 6.

### **For the first time, a European socialist party publishes an official document in favour of basic income.**

A recent Green Paper by the Irish Labour Party is reviewed on p. 8.

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**THIS ISSUE**

*of Basic Income*

has been prepared with the help of  
Christian Arnsperger, Sue Black, Paul de Beer, Gerd Grözinger, Guy Standing,  
Robert van der Veen, Georg Vobruba and Tony Walter.

## FUTURE EVENTS

**AU-DELA DU R.M.I./  
BEYOND THE WELFARE STATE  
—tentative title—  
(PARIS, SPRING 1992)**

The first evaluation of the "revenu minimum d'insertion" (RMI), a means-tested minimum income scheme introduced in France in 1988, is meant to culminate in the Spring of 1992. This seems a most suitable time to organize a conference on basic income in the French capital. Plans are therefore beginning to be made for a two-day conference that could be held at the University of Paris-Saint-Maur on 3-4 April 1992. The realization of these plans is still contingent upon the possibility of forming a sufficiently diversified local organizing committee. Those interested in presenting a paper on (1) whether and how a basic income could solve the problems revealed by the operation of RMI-like schemes; (2) socio-historical or ethical aspects of the transition from RMI-like schemes to a BI; and (3) institutional, legal, and political aspects of

this transition, whether on a national or European scale, are invited to contact Yoland Bresson (Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion, 58 avenue Didier, F-94210 La Varenne Saint-Hilaire, phone: (33)(1)49768000, fax: (33)(1)48852993) who will forward the proposal to the organizing committee, as the latter takes shape.

**BASIC INCOME  
AND THE LABOUR MARKET  
—tentative title—  
(GENEVA, AUTUMN 1992)**

Plans are also being made another conference that would focus on the impact of various basic income scenarios on the labour market. This would take place in the Autumn of 1992 and be hosted by the International Labour Office. Those interested can contact Guy Standing, ILO, CH-1211 Geneva, phone: (41)(22)7996455, fax: (41)(22)7988685.

## PAST EVENTS

**BASIC INCOME AS AN ANSWER  
TO THE NEW CHALLENGES  
IN SOCIAL POLICY  
(BAD BOLL, GERMANY, 24-26 MAY  
1991)**

This conference (in German) was designed to discuss, in the context of the acute unemployment situation arising from the messy unification process, the opportunity to introduce elements of a basic income into the German system of welfare. The conference started with a lecture by Thomas Schmid, who was in the 80's among the first advocates of a basic income and edited the first German book on this

subject. He spoke on the chance history gave us to overcome the restrictions of the old system by learning that it simply is not up to the chaos we now have to face. Next, Joop Roebroek (Tilburg) drew some lessons from the Dutch experience, Michael Huther (Giesser) presented an econometric model of the costs and distributional effects of an integrated system of income taxes and transfers, Gert Hageer (DIW, Berlin) spoke about different ways of securing more justice among pensioners, and Walter Hanesch (FH Niederrhein) about the implications of a basic income for unemployment insurance. The conference closed with a discussion on the next political steps, with Siegmund Hosdorf, a social-democratic MP and member of the committee on social affairs in the Bundestag and Eric Standfest, who is in charge of the

social policy area within the DGB, the association of the German trade unions.

Conference organizers : Gerd Grözinger & Walter Halliger, Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll, D 7325 Bad Boll, Germany, Fax (49) (7164) 79440. Proceedings available from the Academy's Documentation Centre, DM 12.

**ETHICS AND BASIC INCOME  
(AMSTERDAM, 22 MARCH 1991)**

As this well-attended and lively conference showed once again, it is notoriously difficult to come up with an ethical defence of basic income simple and compelling enough to command wide assent. Building on an agenda set out in a background paper by Jola Jakson and Robert van der Veen, two main questions were discussed: (1) Is it possible to refute conclusively the two most influential ethical objections to basic income (it unjustly legitimizes social parasitism by enabling the idle to survive without working, and it thereby deprives such people of experiencing the intrinsic value of performing paid work), and, (2) What would be the shape of a positive and general ethical defence of basic income?

With respect to (1), social philosopher Hans Achterhuis of the University of Twente—an influential critic of the ideology of paid work—now argues that this question may be misconceived: the pre-eminence of paid work is so deeply entrenched in the convictions and daily experiences of most people, that it would be elitist to expect them to challenge this "fixed point" by a serious consideration of the merits of a basic income. While there is nothing wrong with this sort of intellectual elitism, the very attempt of defending basic income against common judgements about the place of paid work will condemn its advocates to isolation, and hence, political impotence, whatever the actual strength of their arguments. In the lively discussion following Achterhuis's comments, many argued that basic income proposals may fail less because of a moral duty to do paid work, than because they are perceived as violating the principle of reciprocity, applied to 'useful activities'.

Undeterred by these strictures, Govert den Hartogh (senior lecturer in ethics at the University of Amsterdam) proceeded with an argument to the effect that (a) in a just society which recognizes everyone's claim

to pursue his or her own idea of the good life, the value of paid work, such as it is, ought not to be paternalistically imposed on people, while (b) the charge that basic income legitimizes parasitism is groundless once it is shown that there exists an equal right to the proceeds of common resources (as opposed to the personal resource of labour). Such a right may be derived from the libertarian theory of (historical) appropriation of natural resources. But he admitted that this does not provide a positive and general ethical defence of a full basic income. In the subsequent discussion, it was suggested that den Hartogh's approach can only be carried through if one is prepared to invoke egalitarian values which allow one to argue for a full, or even maximal, basic income rather than just any basic income.

Further information, background paper, and a report of the conference (in Dutch) from Robert van der Veen, Vakgroep Algemene Politicologie, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237, 1012 DL Amsterdam, Netherlands.

**THE IMPACT OF A BASIC INCOME  
ON THE LABOUR MARKET  
(AMSTERDAM, 7 JUNE 1991)**

The subject of this seminar organized by the Dutch Workshop on Basic Income was the impact on the functioning of the labour market of introducing a basic income for every adult inhabitant, at the Dutch social minimum level (i.e. Dfl 1100 per capita). This basic income would be financed by levying a tax of about 33 percent on gross value added and—in order not to disturb the functional income distribution between labour and capital—a simultaneous cut in wages with about 54 percent. Prof. Jules Theeuwes (Leiden) opened the seminar with a brief survey of the functions of wages in different theories of the labour market. Each of these functions, he argued, may be hampered by the introduction of a basic income, mainly because a basic income broadens the wedge between gross labour costs for the employer and the net income of the employee. In his opinion a negative income tax would have some of the attractions of a basic income scheme but far less of its drawbacks. Some participants objected that some of the functions or the wages might also be improved by a basic

income. Others questioned the putative contrast between a basic income and a negative income tax scheme, as the consequences of both schemes for both net income and gross labour costs, may be exactly the same. After sketching and discussing the method economists use to explain the labour supply of individuals, Prof. Jacques Siegers presented some results of recent research done by him and others at the University of Utrecht. According to this research, introducing a basic income (as described above) would reduce the supply of labour by married women in the Netherlands from the present 39 to 30 percent of the married female population. In the debate, Siegers acknowledged, that in the case of a radical change of institutions, like the introduction of a basic income, socio-cultural factors which are not incorporated in the model may play an important role and that incorporating such factors would greatly enrich the model. Finally, Walter van Trier (Antwerp) sketched some of the potentials and the limitations of the economic approach to the impact of a basic income on the labour market.

(For further information: Paul de Beer, Koningshoef 37, 1104 EC Amsterdam.)

**BASIC INCOME:  
GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS  
(LONDON, 12 JULY 1991)**

Though in principle focused on the question of how to best disseminate the idea of a basic income, this particularly interesting annual conference of the Basic

Income Research Group addressed a wide variety of issues. David Smith, from DVLSmith & Associates (PO Box 8, Epping, Essex CM16 6QH) reported on the exploratory study he had completed on the diffusion of the idea of basic income. One of his conclusions was that basic income lacked a *champion*, i.e. a credible organization (political party, major voluntary organization, etc.) which would visibly support the proposal, thus showing public opinion that this is no longer a *fringe* idea. Another was that it would be inappropriate, at this stage, to set up large opinion polls in order to produce percentages in favour of, or against, the concept: "such research would not give a true reading of attitudes towards the *potential* of the concept, it would simply play back the fact that there is currently much confusion about the proposal". Other speakers and panelists included Patrick O'Brien, who explained the Alaska dividend scheme (see BI 7:4); Paddy Ashdown, who presented the Liberal Democrats' proposal of an unconditional citizenship income (see BI 7 : 6); Michael Meacher, who defended the Labour Party's programme to end means-testing through a minimum wage plus benefits conditional on employment status, age or family situation; and Samuel Brittan and Steven Webb, the authors of *Beyond the Welfare State* (see BI 10:6). In his concluding statement, the conference chairman, Ralf Dahrendorf, insisted that communicating basic income was not just a matter of persuading people of a principle, but also of showing convincingly that its implementation is technically possible and politically attractive.

(For further information: Tony Walter, BIRG, 102 Pepys Road, London SE14 5SG.)

**PUBLICATIONS**

**DUTCH**

**'T WERKT NIET MEER**, no.1, March 1991 (Newsletter of Werkplaats Basisinkomen, Herman Heijermansweg 20, 1077 WL Amsterdam, Netherlands), 30 p., ISSN 0924-3038.

This somewhat overdue but nicely recast newsletter records several items on the Dutch basic income agenda (all covered in *BI 9* and *10*). The section on the press mentions, interestingly, the initiative of a group of 35 members of the liberal party VVD (always massively opposed to basic income) to campaign for a sizable basic income on grounds of efficiency and debureaucratization. Source: *de Volkskrant*, 28-6-1990.

**'T WERKT NIET MEER**, no. 2, June 1991 (Newsletter of Werkplaats Basisinkomen, Herman Heijermansweg 20, 1077 WL Amsterdam, Netherlands), 26 p., ISSN 0924-3038.

Presents a report, by Paul de Beer, of the conference on ethics and basic income (see *Past Events* above) and a short discussion by the same author of van der Veen's recent PhD thesis (see *BI 10:7*). The first public meeting of the new association "Friends of Basic Income" on 14 September (see *BI 10:3*) will stage a debate confronting the idea of basic income with the philosophy behind the recently adopted government programme on urban renewal. (Address: see above.)

**DE WAARD, Michele. "De desintegratie van onze morele gemeenschap; Ralf Dahrendorf over het ontstaan van een Europese onderklasse", in NRC-Handelsblad, 3 August 1991 (Saturday Supplement).**

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, many Eastern Europeans travelled to the West and tried to settle there. But Western Europe also has to cope with a steadily increasing flow from the South. While some of these immigrants may quickly achieve social integration and economic security, many will not, and they are likely to join the underclass of people whose skills are not in demand and who become

vulnerable to bureaucratic intolerance and popular racism. Failure to integrate and ultimately dissolve this expanding underclass will undermine the countries of the European Community both morally and as regards political stability. This is the grim picture that emerges from a long interview with sociologist Sir Ralf Dahrendorf (currently Warden of St. Anthony's College, Oxford). But all hope is not lost. What we need is a reconstruction of the welfare state that would dissolve the underclass by means of granting truly universal economic citizenship rights. And a basic income would play a central role in that context. Significantly, however, Dahrendorf does not count on any major political party in Europe to carry the day for this liberal and egalitarian view: "I have put my hope on minorities who are able to think. We can lose. But we must not give up."

**Groen Links, een plaatsbepaling**, Groen Links (Amsterdam), 1991, 27p.

A new manifesto from the political formation that grew out of the merger, two years ago, of four small parties on the Dutch left. Starting from first principles, the party strongly asserts its commitment to both equality and liberty. Equality, in fact, just means "an equal degree of the greatest possible freedom for each individual" in both present and future generations. From these principles there follows the proposal of something like a basic income, only feebly presented in this manifesto (at least bearing in mind that the party's main component—the former radical party—has been one of the driving forces in the Dutch basic income debate for over a decade): "The government must guarantee each person individual economic independence. Whether in the form of a basic income, a benefit or a combination of these, this guarantee must enable each to support him or herself."

(Address: Groen Links, PB 700, 1000 AS Amsterdam.)

## ENGLISH

**NEULINGER, John. *The Road to Eden, After All. A human metamorphosis*, Voorthuizen (NL): Giordano Bruno (Hoofdstraat 130, 3781 AJ Voorthuizen,**

Netherlands), 1990, 154p., ISBN 90-50130143, £8 (package and postage included).

In the post-industrial society into which we are moving, "most people will no longer be needed to provide society's basic subsistence needs". According to John Neulinger, Emeritus Professor at the City College of New York and chairman of the (US based) Society for the Reduction of Human Labor, this will require an entirely new political-economic system. The aim of this book, deliberately closer to poetry than to analysis, is to kindle the desire for such a system by exposing the mounting absurdity of a job-centered society. How the latter will be attained, and even what its institutions will look like, are questions the author says he "must leave to those who have the necessary knowledge and skills". Towards the end of his book, however, he ventures a suggestion that some basic income supporters might find congenial. What, he asks, "if we were to set up a worldwide fund, right now, to create an equal guaranteed minimum income in every nation of the world, at an at first negligible rate, but a steadily increasing one. [...] Countries that already have guaranteed minimum incomes would phase out their present systems, to the degree that the World Fund payments approach their levels of guaranteed income. Every nation would contribute proportionally to that nation's economic status [...]". Whether such ideas will ever reach the political agenda, John Neulinger, the energetic leader of the Society for the Reduction of Human Labor will never know. He died on 20 June 1991 of a heart attack. Others, no doubt, will develop his ideas and carry further his work.

(Address of the Society for the Reduction of Human Labor: c/o Prof. David Macarov, Nayot 8, Jerusalem, Israel )

**PARKER, Hermione (ed.). *Basic Income and the Labour Market*, London: Basic Income Research Group (102 Pepys Road, London SE14 5SG, UK), 1991, 50p., ISSN 0962-4880, £2.**

In this collective paper by the Basic Income Research Group (BIRG), well-known problems such as financing and the main differences from the negative income tax are clearly discussed, and different basic income schemes are analysed. The main focus is on the effects of a *partial* basic income (PBI) "because it is the only form of basic income that might be introduced in

the foreseeable future." The scheme would be part of a two-tier system in which *additional* benefits are conditional. Such a combination aims at upholding some incentive to exercise paid work; indeed, since the PBI and any additional benefits are to be financed from taxing paid labour income, there is a "need to promote paid work as well, otherwise there would be financing problems. This conflict between freedom of choice and the need to generate wealth is central." This PBI system is primarily meant to provide an adequate framework both for alleviating poverty and unemployment, and for rehabilitating unpaid work without giving up too much of the tax base. While it is recognized that there is some danger of widespread wage reductions by employers due to a perverse "subsidy effect," it is not clear in the authors' eyes whether the scheme should be supplemented by a national minimum wage. The main secondary advantage of the proposed PBI system is to reduce skill shortages by providing income maintenance during training and education periods. Labour market duality may also be reduced, but in order to be an efficient tool for eliminating other types of labour market discrimination, the PBI scheme must be made part of a wider package, one aimed at fighting the many types of discrimination that have nothing to do with income distribution.

(Editor's address: c/o BIRG, as above.)

**ROOM, Graham, ed. *Towards a European welfare state?*, SAUS Publications (School for Advanced Urban Studies, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4EA), 1991, 282 p., ISBN 1-873575-10-6.**

This book brings together eleven papers first presented at the 1990 British Social Policy Association Conference. Its authors are mainly from Britain, but also from Germany and the Netherlands. As indicated by its title, its focus is on the likely trends in European social policy in the context of the advent of the Single Market. Social policy is understood broadly, so as to cover, for example, community care for the elderly, inter-country adoption or the socio-political rights of migrants. But a great deal of attention is paid to the idea of a European minimum income. As pointed out in the editor's introductory chapter, "the interest of the community in a guaranteed minimum income goes back at least to the beginning of the 1980s, and the advent of

the Single Market has intensified this concern. [...] The growing links of the East European countries with the Community could well reinforce [this concern], in view of the increasing insecurity which citizens of the eastern countries are likely to face as they move towards a market society." As emphasized by Jane Keithley (Durham), however, moves in this direction are bound to meet resistance, not just because they would involve a significant redistribution of the community's wealth, but also because of the channelling of these resources through Brussels. Moreover, "support for a European "safety net" is difficult to sustain on economic grounds alone, given the coexistence of a single market, considerable labour mobility and substantial variations in social assistance entitlements in a federal system such as the U.S.A.". The Community, however has explicitly pledged itself to social as well as economic objectives. And while "the "freedoms" which form the bases of the Single Market are likely to favour the economically stronger Member States", the establishment of a European safety net "may be one way in which the Community will seek to minimise the risk of political instability which could result from the consequent stresses imposed on the economically weakest countries." Jos Berghman (Tilburg), on the other hand, warns that "it would be unwise to concentrate all our energy on a single scenario or proposal as, for example, the introduction of a European minimum income level". His preference is for combining the creation of a European minimum income level (which would introduce a yardstick at the lowest level and be most relevant to the southern countries) with the introduction of a thirteenth country system (i.e. an additional and specifically European social security system which would be mainly of relevance for workers from Northern Europe taking up jobs in less developed countries and would introduce an upper reference point). What form should the minimum income take? Of all contributors, only Georg Vobruba (Hamburg), in a forceful plea for the basic income version, is fully explicit. In their feminist critique of existing welfare state systems, however, Mary Langan and Ilona Ostner (Open University & Bremen) point in the same direction, in particular when they argue against career-based pension schemes, against means-tested child benefits, and

against the choice of households rather than individuals as the unit of entitlement to welfare benefits.

(Editor's address: University of Bath, Department of Social Policy, Bath, UK.)

**STAGG, Emmet, ed. *Social Welfare. Beyond the Welfare State*, A policy discussion paper presented to the 1991 Labour Party Conference, Dublin: Labour Party, 1991, 28p.**

According to the authors of this clear and bold discussion paper published by the Irish Labour Party (the main component in the Left coalition that won the latest Presidential election), "it is now time to rehabilitate the radical goals that motivated the pioneers of [their] movement". At the core of the strategy thus called for "lies the goal of socialists since the 19th century—the radical demand to guarantee all workers, all adults, regardless of their earning, wealth or employment status, a lifetime income—in other words, a Basic Income for life". The paper spells out the advantages an adequate basic income would present. But while "short-term policies without long-term goals are aimless", "long-term goals without step-by-step strategies to reach them are academic". Among these strategies are the replacement of the current patchwork of ill-integrated welfare schemes by a basic social welfare payment, the rationalisation of all child income support schemes into one universal child benefit, the rationalisation of existing pension schemes into a single, comprehensive Old Age Pension, payable to all those who reach 65, regardless of income or employment status, and the integration. This set of strategies is of course "only one component of an overall anti-poverty, pro-women economic and social strategy". It needs to be complemented by other measures in the areas of industrial policy, working time reduction, child care, etc. Moreover, it "will have to be pursued not only at national level but at European level as well".

(Editor's address: Emmet Stagg, TD, Social Welfare Spokesman of the Labour Party, Parliament House, Dublin, Eire.)

**VAN PARIJS, Philippe.** "Equal endowments as undominated diversity", in *Alternatives to Welfarism*, special issue of *Recherches Economiques de Louvain* (3 Place Montesquieu, B-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve), in honour of Professor A. Sen, vol. 56, n°3-4, 327-56.

How can justice possibly be consistent with an unconditional, uniform basic income in a society in which genetic and social processes have endowed people with very different capacities? If one takes seriously the existence of handicaps, is one not driven instead to a highly differentiated system of lump-sum taxes and transfers as the most appropriate implementation of the ideal of social justice? Starting from a thorough discussion of the most elaborate attempts to provide criteria for the just compensation of handicaps, this paper presents and argues for an alternative criterion ("undominated diversity" or

"potential envy-freedom"), which does justify a significant amount of targeted redistribution to the "handicapped" but remains consistent, in a sufficiently affluent and diverse society, with a substantial uniform basic income. In his reply ("Welfare, freedom and social choice", in the same issue), Amartya Sen endorses the idea of undominated diversity as consistent with the spirit of his own approach, but suggests that it should be amended in a way that allows for aggregative (or efficiency) as well as distributive (or egalitarian) considerations to be incorporated. This amounts to a loosening of the constraint of undominated diversity, and hence to an expanded potential for a uniform transfer.

(Author's address: Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, B-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve.)

## FRENCH

**AZNAR, Guy.** *Le travail, c'est fini et c'est une bonne nouvelle!*, Paris: Pierre Belfond (216 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75007 Paris), 1990, 238 p., ISBN 2-7144-2607-7.

In this provocative and lightly written book, Guy Aznar advocates a "second check" or "work-sharing check," a compensatory income paid out to any worker who moves to part-time work due to productivity increases. This measure, he claims, should make work-sharing viable as a weapon against unemployment. Contrary to basic income, it is argued, the second check does not create a dual society because it does not redistribute money independently of working time. Although it may have some "social usefulness in the short run", basic income is considered to be flawed because it comes as a *consequence* of the reduction in individual working time, rather than as a *condition* for such a reduction. Basic income is portrayed somewhat narrowly in this book as a right-wing measure designed to restore social order and market flexibility. (In fact, some of what the author calls "left-wing utopias" also look like basic income schemes in the usual sense.) The measure proposed by the author, however, is open to the objection that it implies an appropriation of productivity rents by a limited number of persons, namely those who have full-time paid work at the time when work-sharing is introduced.

(Address: c/o Synapse, 66 boulevard de Sébastopol, 75003 Paris.)

**BRESSON, Yoland & GUITTON, Henri (eds.).** *Repenser la solidarité*, Paris: Editions Universitaires (Collection "Penser l'économie"), 1991, 134p., ISBN 2-7113-0460-4.

A short but varied collective introduction to basic income (or "existence income", as they prefer to call it) by members of the Association pour l'Introduction du Revenu d'Existence (A.I.R.E.). As Henri Guitton emphasizes in his introduction, the latter regard France's new "revenu minimum d'insertion" as an uncontroversial social progress, but one that merely paves the way for a genuine basic income. The book contains short contributions by Frère Sylvain, Yves Bot and François Perdrizet, who combine Christian inspiration and first-hand experience with the problems a basic income is meant to tackle; a longer piece by psychologist René Macaire on a wide range of issues raised by a basic income; and a more economics-oriented contribution by Yoland Bresson of the University of Paris XII, who argues in favour of an objective determination of the level of basic income. Bresson's (relatively technical) argument is based on a "time theory of value," as distinct from the Marxist labour theory. In his view, the appropriate level of basic income does not depend on any subjective notion of

minimum needs; it is given as a fraction of the available money stock, this fraction in turn being an average of people's "socially constrained time." Basic income is thus "the counterpart of everyone's productivity, inherited in part, and whose merits can be traced back to no one in particular". Its foundation is each individual's *potential* for exchange of time, rather than the result of any *effective* work performance. Interestingly, the basic income may decrease as society becomes more productive. For France, Bresson suggests a monthly basic income of 1,500 Francs for 1990, and suggests several concrete scenarios for the financing of this amount.

(Authors' address: c/o Association pour l'instauration du revenu d'existence, Futuribles International, 55 rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris)

**DUBOIN, Marie-Louise & al. "Faut-il se battre pour l'allocation universelle?"**, in *La Grande Relève* (B.P. 108, 78110 Le Vésinet) 895 (décembre 1990), 3, and 896 (janvier 1991), 14-15.

The majority of the responses to the survey organized (among its readers) by the journal of the French "distributist" movement (see *BI* 9:9) express support for the introduction of a tax-financed unconditional basic income as a step towards the realization of a "distributive economy". But many insist that this should not be dissociated from the other major measure advocated by the movement: the introduction of a pure consumption currency, which is the currency in which the basic income would need to be paid. For a central tenet of the doctrine of Jacques Duboin (a French politician and author who founded the movement in the 1930s) is that a substantial basic income becomes payable to all not through redistribution from some citizens to others, but through the *distribution* (hence the movement's name) of what is henceforth being created by machines and technology. The appropriate institutional tool is therefore not a system of taxes (even on value added) and transfers (even universal), but the issuing of money in a special currency that cannot be hoarded, at a pace dictated by economic development.

(Authors' address: c/o La Grande Relève, as above.)

**EUZÉBY, Chantal. *Le Revenu minimum garanti***. Paris: La Découverte (1 Place Paul

Painlevé, F-75005 Paris), Collection "Repères", 1991, 123p., ISBN 2-7071-2004-9.

In this useful little book, Chantal Euzéby, a professor of economics at the University of Grenoble, surveys the main strategies that have been proposed and used in the fight against poverty. Her historical accounts are not always very accurate (for example, the 1985 WRR report is presented as a defeated law proposal), her critical discussions of alternative proposals often suffer from a failure to distinguish between intrinsic and incidental features of various schemes (for example, it is not acknowledged that nothing prevents a basic income and a negative income tax from yielding the same net distribution of income), and her classification of various propositions sometimes yields very odd results (thus, Standing and the Collectif Charles Fourier represent the right-wing version of basic income, while Bresson and Guillaume illustrate the left-wing version). Still, the more general chapters provide a useful background for the more detailed presentation of the French "revenu minimum d'insertion" and the discussion of its shortcomings, several of which (in particular the formidable difficulty of ensuring durable "insertion" after withdrawal of the allowance) reveal an incipient awareness of what basic income is all about. "Progress towards a universalistic conception of social protection embodied in a guaranteed minimum income [such as the RMI]", the author concludes, "raises the question of whether one should move towards a basic income [*allocation universelle*] system, which would break the link between work and social protection. But only the richest countries can contemplate introducing such a system at a level sufficient to give people the option to give up paid work. [...] Before today's utopia becomes tomorrow's reality in some particularly dynamic and efficient economies, this is the time for a generalization of the conditional type of guaranteed minimum income in the various EC countries."

(Author's address: Université de Grenoble II, Département des sciences économiques, Grenoble, France.)

**PASSET, René, GANTELET, Gilles & BARTHALAY, Bernard.** "Eclairages sur ... le revenu européen de citoyenneté", in *Transversales Science/ Culture* (GRIT, 29 rue Marsoulan, F-75012 Paris) 10, juillet-août 1991, 7-13.

A short dossier on basic income in this ecologically inclined French newsletter. René Passet (of Paris-Sorbonne) rehearses the main arguments and objections. For him, a basic income is essentially justified as a way of distributing more fairly the fruits of technical progress. He pays tribute to the moral appeal of Gorz's idea of a compulsory social service, but rejects it in view of the formidable administrative set-up it would require. Gilles Gantelet (of the University of Lyon) argues that a European

citizenship income is the objective European social policy should pursue. A basic pension, a basic allowance for students and housewives are some steps which should be taken, but in order to get as quickly as possible to a genuine basic income. Finally, Bernard Barthalay (of the University of Lyon II) stresses that the introduction of a European citizenship income would be a way of developing the European model of social organisation, which keeps exercising a considerable power of attraction. It would also be a way of justifying a posteriori, through a revolutionary social innovation, the nice label "Community" used by the EEC to describe itself.

(Authors' address: c/o GRIT, as above.)

## GERMAN

**VOBRUBA, Georg.** *Moderne, Modernisierung, Sozialpolitik*, Diskussionspapier n°4-91, Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, 31p.

This theoretical paper about the links between modernity, modernisation, and social policy draws on material presented by Georg Vobruba at the BIEN's Third International Conference in 1990 (see *BI* 9:3-4). The author argues that the crucial contribution of social policy to the development of modernity is "to foster a relative autonomy from economic constraints within a context of economic scarcity." The article is not directly about basic income, but there is a clear connection here. Basic income can play a central role both in economic and ecological modernisation. In economic modernisation, because it is part of "institutional arrangements which make flexibility possible while establishing stability." In ecological modernisation, because "means of existence provided outside the labour market allow ecological policy to become disconnected from questions of economic distribution. It becomes possible for subjects to (...) follow different interests without having to trade off disadvantages (...) between which there can be no trade-off."

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

**KURSWECHSEL N°1/1991,** *Grundeinkommen: Zwischen Gesellschaftsveränderung, sozialpolitischer Resignation und Verteilungskonflikt* (published by Beirat

für gesellschafts-, wirtschafts- und umweltpolitische Alternativen, BEIGEWUM, Mariahilferstraße 105/2/13, 1060 Wien, Austria), 108p., ISSN 1016-8419.

This is a special issue of a left-green oriented, Vienna-based journal entirely devoted to social support (*Mindestsicherung*) and to the comparative analysis of existing and ideal minimum income systems. Several of the papers are published in English, and most of them deal with basic income. A general defence of basic income against its alleged remoteness from established ethical values is provided by Erwin Weissel (of Vienna University) who argues that "[taking existing values seriously] is already enough to uproot today's society." The effects and implications of recent changes in the social structure of work are also extensively discussed. Tom Schmid (of the Austrian Trade Union movement) argues that giving people a basic income may not be enough, and that it may need to be supplemented by a basic allocation of social services. But as evidenced by other papers, basic income is seen precisely as a way of acknowledging this importance of unpaid, socially useful work. Philippe Van Parijs (of Louvain University) argues for the compatibility of basic income with both justice and efficiency, stressing among other things its ability to free people from having to accept paid work. Adalbert Evers (of the European Centre for Welfare Policy, Vienna) also defends this view, but adds that it poses a challenge to more traditional, citizenship-based views because "differentiated rights and resources based

(...) on social (...) participation may be as important as basic incomes based on citizenship." Other arguments favourable to basic income, distinct from the notion of a new work configuration, are discussed by Georg Vobruba (of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research), the more controversial ones being (i) the advantages of basic income for trade unions and (ii) the possibility it gives to set up ecological policies. Some authors, although positively inclined, voice some skepticism as to the short-run political feasibility of basic income schemes. For Kees Vendrik (of the Dutch Green-Left Party), basic income has little chance of gaining ground even in an advanced welfare state such as the Netherlands, because strong (mainly financial) tensions within the established social security system tend "to force the left to concentrate solely on defending existing social assistance and benefits" rather than make proposals for more fundamental reforms. Along with Andrea Fischer,

Alexander de Roo (both of the Green group in the European Parliament) emphasizes the political immobility hampering social reforms on EC levels, but he emphasizes nonetheless that basic income "may soon be back on the political agenda."  
(Address: see above.)

**OPIELKA, Michael.** "Zur Logik von Grundsicherung und garantiertem Grundeinkommen. Fürsorge, Sozialversicherung und Versorgung in evolutionärer Perspektive", in *Zeitschrift für Sozialreform* 37 (2), 1991, 80-114.

A new version of the evolutionary approach to social policy developed by the author in earlier writings (see *BI* 4:9). A basic income is proposed not as an alternative, but as part of an integrated social security system.

(Author's address: D-5202 Hennef 41 Wiederschall, Germany.)

## HUNGARIAN

**GÁCS, Ende.** 'A tarsadalmi alapjövédelmek' ["Basic Income"], in *ESELY* (Budapest) 1991, No. 2.

After a short survey of earlier proposals (social dividend, negative income tax), according to which each member of the society is given a guaranteed income, the author analyses the reasons behind the revival of these ideas in West European

countries in the form of a basic income. Next, he presents various practical proposals for introducing a basic income and discusses their expected effects. In the light of arguments and counter-arguments, he concludes that the introduction of a basic income in its pure form is not probable but in a partial variant it can be realized.

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**The Basic Income European Network was founded in September 1986 to serve as a link between individuals and groups committed to, or interested in, basic income, i.e. an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement, and to foster informed discussion on this topic throughout Europe.**

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