On 20 September, the French will vote on the future of Europe. On 18 and 19 September, we shall be discussing in Paris what form this future should take.

Final details on the fourth BIEN conference, to be held this month at the University of Paris-Saint-Maur, on page 11.

BIEN members are warmly invited to attend the fourth meeting of BIEN's General Assembly, to be held in Paris on 19 September at 6 pm, at the same place as the conference.

From RMI to basic income?
A brand new collection of French contributions is reviewed on pages 8-9.

Is an unconditional income immoral?
This is the central question of a new paperback on the ethics of basic income reviewed on page 8.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT:
An annotated bibliography of books on basic income in six languages is contained in the centre pages.
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**OUR NETWORK**

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. **Keep us informed.** Send promptly to the editor any news, announcements, books, pamphlets, working papers, etc. that may interest other people in the network. Deadline for next issue: 1 December 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.

This issue of *Basic Income*

was prepared with the help of Jude Black, Sue Black, Julian McQueen, Georg Vobruba and all those who spontaneously sent relevant material. Many thanks!
EVENTS

BASIC INCOME RESEARCH GROUP
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1992
(LONDON, 3 JULY 1992)

The Basic Income Research Group organized its annual conference on 3 July at Toynbee Hall, London. Three topics were discussed in the morning: (1) Family-based or individual assessment unit? (2) Will there ever be full employment again? (3) Is a National Minimum Wage a good idea? Each debate consisted in short speeches from opposing positions, followed by a commentary and then by contributions from the floor. Four working groups were formed in the afternoon, on the following topics: (1) basic income and Europe; (2) basic income and unemployment; (3) basic income and a National Minimum Wage; and (4) basic income and the assessment unit. Amongst the speakers were Steven Webb (Institute for Fiscal Studies), Holly Sutherland (London School of Economics), Tony Lloyd MP, and Ken Mayhew (Oxford University). For further information, contact BIRG, 102 Pepys Road, GB-London SE14 5SG, telephone (44)(71)6399838.

BASIC INCOME RESEARCH GROUP
CONSULTATION ON
"A CITIZENS’ EUROPE AND A CITIZENS’ INCOME"
(WINDSOR, 29-30 OCTOBER 1992)

The Basic Income Research Group will be holding a consultation at St. George's House, Windsor, from lunchtime on Thursday 29 October to the afternoon of Friday 30 October. Thursday afternoon will be devoted to citizenship income in a European context, with talks by Lord Meghnad Desai, Sir Ralf Dahrendorf, Hermione Parker, and Bill Jordan. On Friday morning, discussions will focus on the question of how to implement decisions about citizenship income in Great Britain, with short addresses by Michael Welsh MEP, Walter Eltis (NEDO), and John Edmonds (GMB). In the afternoon, several working groups will meet and later report on their conclusions in a final plenary session. The programme and practical information are available from BIRG, 102 Pepys Road, GB-London SE14 5SG, telephone (44)(71)6399838.

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

An updated programme and details about whom to contact for practical matters are given on page 11. BIEN’s General Assembly will be held immediately after the conference, on September 19 at 6 pm.
In this short piece, Amsterdam economist Jos de Beus reviews six models of economic democracy: widespread ownership (Meade), cooperative enterprises (Dahl), the development of a non-monetary sector (Heinze & Offe), market socialism with a right to work (David Miller), public corporatism (David Marquand) and basic income. Despite the crisis of the social-democratic welfare state to which they all claim to provide an alternative, none of these models, de Beus concludes, has managed to provide more than an ideal without a movement.

In much the same line as his doctoral dissertation (see BI 8:5), this new book by Dutch sociologist and anti-poverty activist Raf Janssen argues for a way of reconciling environmental concerns and the satisfaction of everyone's needs that involves the adoption of a more sober way of life. The required "un-scarcing of work, time and money" is never very remote from the concerns that motivate many basic income supporters, including Janssen himself. In this book, however, he only touches briefly on the issue: "The possibility of such a basic income has already been discussed for several years by many people in many countries. However, it does not look likely that such a basic income will be introduced in the near future, despite the fact that recent economic calculations [see the work of de Broeder & de Roo reviewed in BI 12:4] show once again that it would be perfectly feasible in the Netherlands, and that it would have favourable effects on man, society and the environment."

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This issue of the Flemish Jesuits' social and cultural monthly contains James Meade's summary of his *Agathotopia* (see BI 6:7). It is preceded by a short intellectual biography of Meade by BIEN secretary Walter Van Trier and followed by some considerations, also by Van Trier, about basic income as a "third way" in both Eastern Europe, "where the industry that has not yet been privatized can provide the wealth required to pay each citizen a social dividend," and Western Europe, "where an unconditional income on EEC scale can serve as a ground layer for the further harmonization and integration of existing social security arrangements."

This latest issue of the Dutch basic income network contains a brief plea by Jan Pot for basic income as a "ground right" corresponding to the
value of land, which he believes to correspond to one third of the Dutch national income. It also contains a report on the welfare state discussion in the Green-left party, which is now proposing an unconditional (no work test) and fully individualized income guarantee at the level of DFI 200 (about ECU 100) in the form of a negative income tax side by side with a means-tested and differentiated (according to household type) income supplement for those whose income is inadequate. Finally, there is characteristically lucid and sobering piece by Labour Party economist Paul de Beer: "Basic income has great advantages such as the end of controls and the possibility of earning without restriction. But it is misleading to suggest both that a basic income would put an end to all undesired controls and that no one with a minimum income would lose. The adult recognition of the less attractive side of BI is indispensable to show the opponents of basic income that its supporters stand with both feet on the ground."

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

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**ATKINSON, Anthony. The Social Safety Net.**
This lucid and well-documented paper by Cambridge professor of economics Anthony Atkinson was written for an East European audience. It discusses the relevance of a social safety net in the process of transition in Eastern Europe and shows through many illustrations how the optimal design and level of the safety net is strongly dependent on the interaction between social and economic policy, and on an exact specification of the social objectives being pursued. There is no explicit discussion of basic income, but there are various hints. Atkinson argues, for example, that under reasonable assumptions, the existence of a safety net can foster self-employment by reducing the personal risk involved in setting up a business. "This could be further re-införced if the benefit also serves to finance an initial period of unprofitable operation before the business became successful." Clearly, for this objective to be effectively pursued, "the safety net would have to cover those in work", and not just the unemployed and the retired. Existing means-tested safety nets in the West have been criticized on many counts: inadequate levels, low rate of take-up, stigmatization, unemployment traps. Yet, as Atkinson observes, no consensus has emerged about how to reform them, no doubt partly because there is no real consensus about the objectives. Those who argue in favour of more selectivity as a condition for (politically achievable) adequate levels of provision would do well to ponder on the following passage from an ILO report quoted at the end of the paper: "People are more willing to contribute to a fund from which they derive benefit than to a fund going exclusively to the poor. The poor gain more from universal than from income-tested benefits."

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**BIRG BULLETIN, n°15, July 1992 (Basic Income Research Group, 102 Pepys Road, GB-London SE14 5SG), 32p., ISSN 0954-8246.**

This issue opens with a plea by Lord Meghnad Desai (London School of Economics) in favour of a basic income guarantee of £50 per week (see also BI 13:8), based on voter status. He sees the main challenge as a political one, since "the important point is to be able to launch [basic income proposals] across the main political parties." Bill Jordan (Sheffield University) also takes a political view and argues that a Citizen's Income would breathe new life into increasingly de-politicized societies. It could offer an alternative to unpopular policies currently used by Western governments to reduce the number of claimants and is also, he claims, the only means by which a civic culture can be re-created over the shambles left by years of hard-line liberalm. The Revd. Ronald Preston (University of Manchester) shares this enthusiasm and goes even further: for him, basic income is an expression of the ability of humans to cooperate in order to comply with "God's will (...) for human flourishing." These views are somewhat mitigated by the findings of Rik van Berkel (University of Utrecht) and trade union consultant Theo Hindriks (see also BI 13:7) that many claimants of social security see basic income in a less glorious light than some of its advocates. "These results," they claim, "emphasise the importance of preventing the BI debate from being monopolised by intellectuals." Alexander de Roo (European Parliament) reports on the failure of the latest citizen's income proposal at the European Parliament (see also BI 12:3 and BI 13:5), while Michel Genet and Philippe Van Parijs (both University of Louvain) argue that a European partial basic income could be financed through...
the very measures which the European Commission proposes. They propose that swollen EEC-level energy taxes should serve to fund a low basic income of about 100 ECUs per month throughout the Community, and explore some consequences such a measure could have. Derek Hum and Wayne Simpson (University of Manitoba) describe the income security system in Canada and show that the "demogrant" component of the transfers currently existing in that country is rather close in spirit to a basic income. Gabriel Amitis (International Social Security Association) offers a broad description of Greece's social security system and argues that "because of the economic crisis (...), the case for introducing a guaranteed (means-tested) Minimum Income [in Greece] looks stronger than the case for a guaranteed (universal) Basic Income."

(First author's address: University of Bradford, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, UK-Bradford BD7 1DP.)


This major new contribution to social theory aims to provide a general and rigorous approach to "social division" that deals with social class as a special case alongside race and gender. The idea of a basic income plays a central role in the last part of the book ("Socialism and social division"), which sketches some political perspectives on the basis of the preceding analysis. Using a simple but elegant mathematical framework, the author analyzes the "basic income game", defined as a situation in which equally able and needy individuals choose between working and not working, knowing that the workers' whole product will be distributed equally to all. He suggests and discusses the feasibility and fairness of various ways in which the economy can be saved from a collapse through universal abstention from work. Although basic income is not nearly as unworkable as some analysts or as authoritarian as some of its critics have claimed, Carling concludes, "it seems very unlikely that a basic income scheme is workable without some system of sanctions against free-riders. (...) Whatever social apparatus is devised to administer these sanctions—formal or informal, moral or material, centralized or decentralized—there will have to be externally applied discipline in the society."

(First author's address: Perriton Farm House, Whimple, Exeter, England.)
According to Danish political scientist Jørn Loftager, the relevance of basic income has to be assessed in the context of a “crisis of industrialist problem-solving strategies,” characterized by the search for a new mix of institutional mechanisms that goes “beyond [the] welfare state/market compromise which (…) has shown major difficulties and contradictions.” The basic context is one in which the notion of “civil society” is increasingly viewed as an alternative both to market economics and to State management. The paper begins with a long and well-argued discussion of the pros and cons of basic income. The second part tries to assess the feasibility of basic income for Denmark. The conclusions in this respect are, as could be expected, rather ambiguous, mainly because the effect of a basic income and the correlative high tax rates on Danish labour supply is not easy to estimate. “The ambiguity regarding the effects of a basic-income scheme is related to its status as a mechanism beyond the market-welfare state compromise. Inasmuch as it seeks to build upon (…) the logic of the (labour) market, (…) it will sustain the existing materialistic culture of consumption. [But] basic income is a de-commodifying device too, inasmuch as it will secure a basis of subsistence independent of the labour market. In that respect, it might contribute to the (…) recognition of the crucial importance of civil society.”

(Author’s address: Institute of Political Science, University of Aarhus, 8000 Aarhus, Denmark.)


This is an informative, clear and sympathetic discussion of Beyond Rhetoric, the recently released report of the U.S. National Commission on Children set up by President Bush and chaired by Senator John D. Rockefeller IV. One single proposal stands out as the major thrust of the report: a refundable tax credit of $1,000 per year and per child, i.e. an unconditional basic income of over $90 a month for every American under 18. The author explains and endorses the Commission’s preference for such a tax credit over its main competitors: (1) an expansion of the earned income tax credit (which would be of no use to the unemployed), (2) a rise in the minimum wage (most of which would be of no use to poor families with children), and (3) enhanced child support for single parents (which would create a strong disincentive for single mothers to get married). Refundable tax credits would “provide universal benefits, thus giving them greater political standing and reducing the likelihood that they will be reduced at some future date.” They would constitute an important step in the right direction, even though one can of course not expect from a single policy a complete solution to the problem of child poverty.

(Author’s address: Monmouth College, Department of Economics and Finance.)
Basic income has been vindicated using the widest range of arguments. Liberty and equality, efficiency and simplicity, joint ownership of the Earth and equal sharing in the benefits of technical progress, autonomy from bosses, husbands and bureaucrats, have all been invoked in its defence. Objections, too, are many and varied. But one of them has emerged, on both the Left and the Right, as the main stumbling block: the ethical objection that it is unfair to receive an income without giving something in exchange—or at least being willing to do so. Can this objection be countered? This is the central question of this book. A long introduction by the editor provides a comprehensive historical survey of competing justifications of basic income. It is followed by two pieces on the socio-economic background of the contemporary basic income discussion, one by German social theorist and first BIEN chairman Claus Offe and one by British labour economist and BIEN co-chairman Guy Standing. And then comes the ethical discussion itself, with contributions by Hillel Steiner and Alan Carling on the libertarian argument, by John Baker, Brian Barry and Richard Norman on the egalitarian argument, by Bill Jordan, André Gorz and Michael Freeden on the communitarian argument, and by Robert Goodin and Philippe Van Parijs on efficiency-based arguments. This collection does not settle the controversial issues it tackles. But it provides a bundle of elaborate arguments which no future contribution to the ethical discussion can safely ignore.

**FRENCH**

A collective volume on minimum income guarantees with contributions by Yolande Bresson, Alain Caillé, Marie-Louise Duboin, Chantal Euzéby, Gilles Gantelet, André Gorz, Pierre Lavagne, René Passet, Jacques Robin and Philippe Van Parijs, among others. The analysis starts from the recognition that modern Western economies have undergone fundamental technological and social changes which render them increasingly prosperous, yet incapable of securing full employment. Against this background, some of the authors argue in favour of the notion of a "distributive economy." Two chapters are devoted to the guaranteed income schemes which currently exist in Europe, with particular emphasis on the French "revenu minimum d’insertion" (RMI). Since such schemes, the editors argue, are "interesting advances towards the recognition of a right to the coverage of individuals’ basic needs" but are still too far from the desired "distributive logic," many contributions are devoted to more radical proposals diversely called existence income, universal grant and citizenship income. The dimension of citizenship, it is argued, becomes essential once the link between the notion of a successful life and workforce participation has been severed. The European dimension of such schemes is strongly emphasized, and one
chapter is even devoted to showing how a basic income (here called "revenu d'existence") could solve problems which are left open by the Common Agricultural Policy and its "ill-adapted system of aids." The last part of the book is devoted to the debate between basic income and working-time reduction without income compensation. The book concludes with a plea for a fundamental change in attitudes toward paid work. Although work sharing is an important option, it is argued, it needs to be "coupled with a guaranteed minimum income for everyone." For the editors, "all things considered, the advantages [of such an income] massively outweigh the drawbacks," and they insist on launching the debate about basic or citizenship income at the EEC level, following Jacques Delors's suggestion that Europe should imagine "a new logic of production and exchange."

(Author's address: Copies can be ordered from Transversales, 29 rue Marsoulan, F-75012 Paris, FF70 plus package for BIEN members.)


A well-informed account of guaranteed livelihood schemes at the time of the French Revolution. Thomas Paine's basic cash endowment plus pension proposal is presented against the background of the strict "agrarian guarantism" of the Abbé Antoine de Courmand and the "state guarantism" of the "secours public" that came to prevail. An interesting but long-forgotten fragment of the prehistory of basic income.

(Author's address: Université de Nantes, Faculté des Sciences Economiques, 110 Boulevard Michelet, F-44300 Nantes.)


This well-documented paper by two labour economists presents the tentative conclusions of a survey conducted by the Parisian Centre de recherche pour l'étude et l'observation des conditions de vie (CREDOC) on a sample of almost 2000 recipients of the "revenu minimum d'insertion" (RMI). Most recipients feel they are not stigmatized, and although the sample is rather heterogeneous in terms of attitudes towards work, many recipients see the RMI mostly as a means to get back into the labour market. The results, however, are less convincing, according to the authors, mainly because the "insertion" component is unsatisfactory. Many beneficiaries are medium- or long-term unemployed who are increasingly estranged from the labour market, so that "two years after the introduction of the RMI in France, a large majority of those recipients who would like to work are unlikely to find a stable position in the near future." Another problem is that most recipients in the sample never signed the "insertion contract" which is supposed to stipulate the efforts the person has to make towards social re-insertion. Since, in addition, there is no obligation for firms or the State to hire RMI beneficiaries, "the recipients of the RMI are not those with the best outlook for job access." The authors doubt that there will be a strong public desire to abandon the RMI, but they predict the progressive adoption of a "differentiated RMI" characterized by clearly distinct groups of beneficiaries—which might lead to a dichotomy between those really asking for social re-insertion and the others.

(First author's address: CREDOC, 142, rue du Chevaleret, F-75013 Paris.)
In this volume, the Swiss social help organization Caritas publishes the contributions to a session on minimum income held in February 1991. The starting point of the session was the fact that, although Switzerland remains a very prosperous country, the gap between middle classes and the poor is growing ever wider. In the face of this problem, "small and isolated changes in social policy do not offer any long-term solutions." A guaranteed minimum income appears to be a possible vector of fundamental reform. Most contributors are sceptical about a fully unconditional basic income and prefer to focus their discussions and calculations on variants of the French "revenu minimum d'insertion" (RMI), which is both means- and work-tested. The mistrust about an unconditional scheme derives less from the (classical) problems of laziness and exploitation than from a feeling that such a scheme "represents a measure of pure social assistance." What matters, it is claimed, is rather to give citizens the means to be re-inserted in the society, and in that respect the RMI is seen as more appropriate.

(Address: Caritas Schweiz, Inlandhilfe, Löwenstraße 3, CH-6002 Luzern.)

The concept of a guaranteed minimum income belongs to a rather long tradition in social theory, which can be traced from Hegel to Habermas, Dahrendorf or Offe via the work of Eduard Heimann. This tradition emphasizes the changes which affect the relationship between economy and society in the long run, or the "societal rationalization of the economy." In Hegel's remarks on poverty in The Philosophy of Law, the stage is set for an examination of the constitutional character of the guaranteed minimum income. Although Heimann did not address the idea of a guaranteed minimum income as such, his Social Theory of Capitalism of 1929 provides a frame of reference for the project of a contemporary theory of social policy that fosters such an idea. A theory of social policy that treats the guaranteed minimum income as a constitutional entitlement really takes shape in the works of authors such as Dahrendorf and Offe. The article concludes by construing the concept of a guaranteed minimum income as one step in a process of societal rationalization of the economy.

The article presents a short summary of the German basic income discussion in the eighties. It starts with a critique of the link between waged labour and the selectivity of the social security system (especially in connection with female poverty). It then summarizes critical counterarguments from the trade union and feminist points of view. Finally, some conditions for a "good" implementation of a guaranteed basic income are offered.

A collection of reflexions on the conflict between ecology and economy in the former planned economies. In her contribution "Citizenship im Modernisierungsprozeß," Sylke Nissen sees a guaranteed basic income as a possible solution to the contradiction between economic interests and ecological priorities.

In this article, a guaranteed basic income is presented as a solution to the socio-political problems of a growing number of "new entrepreneurs" in Switzerland. The author stresses that the trade unions should care more about this growing social group.
REMEMBER AND UPDATED PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 1992

9 am: Registration.
10 am: Opening speech by Yoland Bresson (Paris).

Topic 1: The relevance of basic income in today’s world
Chairman: Edwin Morley-Fletcher, co-chairman of BIEN.
Speakers: Lord Meghnad Desai (London School of Economics) and Philippe Van Parijs (Université Catholique de Louvain).
Panel discussion with René Dumont, François Ewald, Bernard Herzog, Pierre Rosanvallon and others.

Topic 2: The feasibility of basic income and the obstacles to its implementation
Chairman: Henri Guittion, Member of the Institut de France, president of AIRE.
Speakers: Anthony Atkinson (Cambridge University) and Bruno Levy and Pierre Lavagne (Université Paris/St Maur).
Parallel workshops on concrete proposals relating to the introduction of a basic income in individual European countries, at EEC level and in Eastern Europe and the Third World.

Evening: Reception at the Paris City Hall at 6 pm, with the president of the ILO.

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 1992

Topic 3: Historical roots of basic income and assessment of existing guaranteed minimum schemes
Chairman: Guy Standing, co-chairman of BIEN.
Speakers: Walter Van Trier (Antwerp) and Patrick Viveret (Paris)
Two parallel workshops on
• historical roots and theoretical foundations;
• the assessment of the RMI and similar schemes in other countries, in relation to basic income.

Topic 4: What should be proposed? At what level? At what pace?
Plenary session with a general discussion opened by
• brief reports of relevant facts or suggestions that emerge from the workshops;
• brief prepared statements by some participants.
4 pm: Joint declaration and closing speeches by Edwin Morley-Fletcher, co-chairman of BIEN, and Henri Guittion, chairman of AIRE.

5 pm: Drink offered by the University of Paris-Saint-Maur.
6 pm: Business meeting—BIEN General Assembly.

The workshops on topics 2 and 3 will be addressed, among others, by M.-L. Duboin, B. Gazier, P. Lavagne, M. Pagat, F. Perdrizet, P. Sauvage, M. Genet, C. Euzéby, D. Purdy, H. Parker and others.

Working languages: French and English.
Registration fee: FF350, including conference papers and meals.
For registration and practical information, including hotel reservations, contact Miss H. Boussatha, Faculté des Sciences Économiques et de Gestion de Paris/Saint-Maur, 58, Avenue Didier, F-94210 La Varenne Saint-Hilaire, telephone: (33)(1)49768098, telefax: (33)(1)48852993.
WHAT IS BIEN?

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.

Address:
Walter Van Trier
BIEN Secretary
Bosduifstraat 21
B-2018 Antwerpen, Belgium
phone: (32)(3) 2204182 (office)
(32)(3) 2711642 (home)
Bank account: 001-2204356-10
at the CGER, 21 rue Archimède, 1040 Brussels

TO BECOME A MEMBER OF BIEN FOR THE PERIOD 1991-1994

You need to pay your membership fee (standard: 1000BF; unwaged: 500BF; institutional: 4000FB; or equivalent amounts in your country's currency) and return the form below to the address indicated.

Unless you have a strong reason for doing otherwise, we strongly recommend that you simply put the required amount of money (no coins!) in a well sealed envelope and send it, along with the form overleaf, to BIEN's secretary. This has proved the simplest and cheapest mode of payment in the past, and no less reliable than any other. Otherwise, use either a Eurocheque (made out in Belgian Francs and in a Belgian town) or a US Cashier's check.

Please fill in and return to BIEN, c/o W.Van Trier, Bosduifstraat 21, B-2018, Antwerpen.

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O Reduced (BF500 or equivalent)

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O US Cashier’s check
O Transfer to bank account (institutional rate and donations only)
O Eurocheque (made out in Belgian Francs)