

BASIC INCOME 32

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Newsletter of the Basic Income European Network

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was prepared with the help of Laurence Jacquet, Guy Standing, Yannick Vanderborght and all those who spontaneously sent relevant material.

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ELECTION TIME

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: BIEN'S SECRETARY ELECTED MEP

On 10-13 June 1999, citizens of the 15 member countries of the European Union voted for the European Parliament. Alexander de Roo, secretary of BIEN since September 1998 and member of its executive committee since 1986, was elected one of the 30 Dutch members of the European Parliament for the green party Groenlinks.

He won't be the only one to have heard of basic income in the Strasburg Assembly. For example, newcomers among Belgium's 25-member representation include Pierre Jonckeeere (green party ECOLO), who took part in BIEN's founding meeting in 1986; Frank Vandembroucke (socialist party SP), who devoted part of the doctoral dissertation he recently submitted at Oxford University to a critical discussion of the foundations of an unconditional basic income; and Michel Hansenne (Christian-democratic party PSC), who, as Belgium's employment minister (before becoming the Director General of ILO), introduced an important step towards basic income, in the form of a subsidized voluntary career interruption scheme.

In France, the economist Yoland Bresson, chairman of the Association for an existence income (AIRE), was standing on a list called "Politique de vie sur l'Europe", which obtained a few thousands votes (0.02%). In France ("Vivant Energie France") and in Belgium ("Vivant"), there was a list focusing on the proposal of an unconditional basic income as a substitute for all existing transfers (see below). It obtained 0.7% of the vote in France, and 2.0% in Belgium, i.e. around 120.000 votes in each country (France is bigger but has a lower turnout) and no seat.

GERMANY, FINLAND, BELGIUM: AT LEAST TWO BIEN MINISTERS

At the national level, the 1998 German election had led to the formation of a red-green government, with a member of BIEN as its health minister: Andrea Fischer, formerly social policy parliamentary spokesperson for the Grünen, has had an interest in basic income ever since she was a student. The March 1999 Finnish election kept in power a multi-party coalition with a green component. The Ministry of health and social welfare has been allocated for half the length of the legislature to another long-time member of BIEN, Osmo Soininvaara, who has been fervently promoting basic income in his influential writings for many years.

Belgium's June 1999 national election saw a massive green victory (for example, ECOLO became the second party in Brussels, capital of the country, and the first party in Namur, capital of the French-speaking region Wallonia), with Philippe Defeyt, co-founder of the Collectif Charles Fourier in 1984 and of BIEN in 1986, leading a much strengthened green group in the Wallone Parliament.

VIVANT, EUROPE'S FIRST BASIC-INCOME PARTY

However, as far as basic income is concerned, the most striking feature of Belgium's June 1999 election was the performance of Vivant. This new party was founded two years ago in order to promote, in left-liberal style, the introduction of an unconditional basic income ("basisinkomen", "revenu de base") pitched at 500 Euro per month, funded out of a massively increased VAT, and replacing most existing transfer schemes. Its founder and sponsor is the affluent high-tech businessman and life member of BIEN Roland Duchatelet, who is said to have spent over 2.5 million Euro funding the campaign (no doubt many times what has ever been spent promoting the idea of basic income anywhere in Europe). Vivant managed to attract some 2% of the vote, or well over 100.000 voters, spread fairly evenly throughout the country. This is considerably more than any other party not previously represented in the national Parliament (the Communist Party, for example, got 0.4% of the vote). Because Belgium's electoral system is not strictly proportional, this score does not earn Vivant any seat in the 150-member national Parliament, but only one seat in the Parliament of the Brussels region. Vivant intends to field candidates in next year's local elections. Whether or not it will survive and develop, it has certainly greatly contributed to spreading some familiarity with the idea of a basic income far beyond the intellectual circles to which it was still confined. Many must have been puzzled, during the campaign, to see huge posters with the sole slogan: "Free yourselves by giving yourselves a basic income."

HISTORICAL NOTE : BASIC INCOME FIRST PROPOSED IN 1848

While Marx and Engels were finishing off the Communist Manifesto just a few blocks away, the Brussels lawyer Joseph Charlier (1816-1896) formulated the first known proposal of a genuine basic income. He did so in a book entitled Solution du problème social ou constitution humanitaire. Basée sur la loi naturelle, et précédée de l'exposé de motifs (Bruxelles, "Chez tous les libraires du Royaume", 1848, 106p.), which he was to develop much later into La Question sociale résolue, précédée du testament philosophique d'un penseur (Bruxelles, Weissenbruch, 1894, 252p.). Undoubtedly inspired by the Fourierist tradition, he saw the equal right to the ownership of land as the foundation of an unconditional right to some income. But he rejected both the right to means-tested assistance advocated by Charles Fourier himself and the right to paid work advocated by his most prominent disciple Victor Considerant. The former, he reckoned, only dealt with the effects, and the latter involved too much mingling by the state. Under the labels "minimum" or "revenu garanti" (and later "dividende territorial"), he proposed endowing every citizen with an unconditional right to a quarterly (later, monthly) payment of an amount fixed annually by a representative national council, on the basis of the rental value of all real estate. Such a scheme would end "the domination of capital over labour". Would it not encourage idleness? "Hard luck for the lazy: they will be put on short allowance. Society's duty does not reach beyond securing each a fair share of the enjoyment of what nature puts at his disposal, without usurping anyone's rights." Anything above the minimum will have to be earned.

[A fascinating, well-documented analysis of Charlier's ideas and his Fourierist pedigree is to be found in John Cunliffe (john.cunliffe@uce.ac.uk) and Guido Erreygers (guido.erreygers@ufsia.ac.be), "The Enigmatic Legacy of Fourier: From the 'Right to the Minimum' to 'Basic Income'", paper prepared for presentation at the HES Conference, Greensboro (North Carolina), June 1999, 26p.)

EVENTS

Berlin, October 2000

BIEN's 8th CONGRESS

The 8th International Congress of the Basic Income European Network will be held in Berlin on 6-7 October 2000 under the title "Economic Citizenship Rights for the 21st century".

It will consist in plenary sessions (with simultaneous translation) and parallel workshops.

The organiser is Professor Claus Offe (Humboldt Universität, Unter den Linden 6, D – 10099 BERLIN, fax 49-30-20315.271, coffe@rz.hu-Berlin.de), in collaboration with BIEN's executive committee.

More information in due course.

Paris, December 1998

AC! Steps towards a European network for income

The network AC! consists of 180 collective throughout France. Since 1996, it has been advocating a guaranteed minimum income at the level of France's mandatory minimum wage. Jointly with groups in Germany and elsewhere in Europe it took the initiative of a "Manifesto for the guarantee of the means of existence for all" and has published a leaflet in three languages (Vers un réseau européen pour le revenu/ Auf zu einem europäischen Netzwerk für das Einkommen/ Steps towards a European network for income), in which it briefly presents its main ideas and objectives.

(Contact address: Commission Revenu d'AC! 42 rue d'Avron, F-75020 Paris, Fax 33-1-43730003, com.revenu@ras.eu.org.)

Frankfurt, 26 March 1999

Real Freedom for All. Ein staatlich gewährtes Grundeinkommen als Garantie?

A dense one-day workshop organised by a working group of Lutheran theologians on both the ethical and social-policy dimensions of basic income, with Ph. Van Parijs's *Real Freedom for All* (Oxford, 1995) as a point of departure and with the participation of Angelika Krebs (philosopher, University of Frankfurt), Joachim Mitschke (economist, University of Frankfurt), Ulrich Steinvoth (philosopher, University of Hamburg), Stephan Lessenich (sociologist, University of Göttingen) and Philippe Van Parijs (philosopher, University of Louvain). A special issue partly based on this workshop is being planned in the journal *Analyse und Kritik* (coordinator: Dr Angelika Krebs, Krebs@em.uni-frankfurt.de)

For further information about the workshop: Dr Torsten Meireis (torstenem@hol.com), Zelterstrasse 54, D-60259 Frankfurt am Main, Germany).

Brussels, 10 June 1999

The New Social Question : Low Wages, Unions and Traps

A technical workshop organised by the Chaire Hoover d'éthique économique et sociale (Université catholique de Louvain) within the framework of a Belgian inter-university federal research project on "The new social question" co-ordinated by Prof. Bea Cantillon (director of Antwerp University's Centre for Social Policy). It will be mainly an opportunity to discuss some of the work currently carried out as part of the project. The focus is on basic income and related schemes (Earned Income Tax Credit, Negative Income Tax, etc.) in relation to unemployment traps and Trade Unions. Speakers include Lieve De Lathouwer and Ive Marx (Antwerp), Bruno Van der Linden, Quentin Wibaut, Isabelle Degreef and Yannick Vanderborght (Louvain), Benoît Mahy (Mons), Koen Pelleriaux and Danièle Meulders (Brussels)

(For a detailed programme and further information: Annick Dabeye, Chaire Hoover, 3 place Montesquieu, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, tel. 32-10-473951, dabeye@etes.ucl.ac.be)

PUBLICATIONS

CATALAN

RAVENTÓS, Daniel. El Subsidi Universal Garantit: estratègies de fundamentació, Universitat de Barcelona: Departament de teoria sociològica, filosofia del dret i metodologia de les ciències socials, Doctorate in economics (Dir.: Prof. Félix Ovejero Lucas), December 1998, 319p.

A systematic discussion of basic income and the various ways in which it could be justified. A Spanish publication in book form is planned with Editorial Ariel (Barcelona) under the title "El derecho a la existencia. La propuesta del Subsidio Universal Garantizado".

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DUTCH

NIEUWSBRIEF BASISINKOMEN n°26, maart 1999, 16p.

Most of this issue of the newsletter of the Dutch Basic Income Network is taken up by an account of BIEN's Amsterdam Congress by Gosling Putto. The newsletter is now also available by e-mail.

(Address: Emiel Schäfer, Herman Heijermansweg 20, NL-1077 WL Amsterdam. tel. 31-20-5731803, fax: 31-20-6713541, basic.income@wxs.nl, <http://home.wxs.nl/~schafer>.)

RADEMAEKERS, Koen. 1999. De financiële haalbaarheid van een "waardig" basisinkomen, een interactie met de sociale zekerheid en het fiscaal stelsel, Bulletin de Documentation (Ministère des Finances) n° 1, Janvier-Février 1999, 41-77

This paper explores a concrete proposal of a "worthwhile" basic income for Belgium. The author (an assistant in economics at the University of Brussels, and one of the economists behind the new basic-income-focused political party "Vivant") uses a household-based model, which gives a monthly basic income of 450 Euro to every single adult (620 Euro above the age of 65), and 320 Euro to each member of a couple (470 Euro above 65) and an amount rising from 75 to 175 Euro per child. Rademaekers calculates the implications for the government budget, taking into account the complex relations between the tax and social security systems. If the basic income replaces all family allowances, public pensions, unemployment benefits and some other minor benefits, there is an annual deficit of 3.6 billion Euro. To tackle it, Rademaekers proposed the abolition of a number of tax allowances, which has the advantage of increasing transparency. The remaining gap of 0.8 billion Euro should be acceptable, bearing in mind the likely economic effects (not modelled in his calculations): an increase in the average disposable income per family and a subsequent increase in consumption, and a more widespread distribution of employment and a shrinking of undeclared work.

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VAN TRIER, Walter. 1999. "Een basisinkomen: Wat is dat en waarom willen wij dat (minstens bespreken)?", OCMW Visies 14 (1), maart 1999, 21-28.

In this quarterly of Flanders' social assistance centres, Walter Van Trier (sociologist at Leuven University and former secretary of BIEN) defends basic income against an earlier attack by Koen Pelleriaux (sociologist at Brussels University). It is not a panacea for all social problems, but a precious component of a package. It has the advantage of loosening the pressure on jobs and of unburdening the social assistance centres of some of their financial tasks. One key issue is whether its automatic payment can preserve these centres' ability to detect problems of a non-financial nature.

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ENGLISH

ACKERMAN, Bruce & ALSTOTT, Anne. 1999. The Stakeholder Society. New Haven: Yale University Press, 296p., ISBN 0-300-07826-9.

Political philosopher Bruce Ackerman (author of *Social Justice in the Liberal State*, *We the People*, and many other books) and tax lawyer Anne Alstott (his younger colleague at Yale Law School) want to take seriously the ideal of equal opportunity. In addition to an unconditional citizen's pension of, say, \$ 8000 from the age of 67 (p. 130-31), each American citizen is to receive a one-time grant of \$ 80.000 as he reaches early adulthood, to be financed mainly in two ways: a 2% annual wealth tax and a payback of the \$ 80.000 at death if financially possible (p.4-5). Stakeholding, so characterized, "liberates college graduates from the burdens of debt, often with something to spare. It offers unprecedented opportunities for the tens of millions who don't go to college and have often been shortchanged by their high school educations. [...] The stake will give them the independence to choose where to live, whether to marry, and how to train for economic opportunity. Some will fail. But fewer than today." (p. 5) This very stimulating book boldly explores the costs and consequences, social and economic, of this new version of Thomas Paine's old proposal of a universal dowry. Its closing chapter compares its central proposal to three alternatives, Mickey Kaus's proposal of a national service (The End of Equality, 1992), Edmund Phelps's proposal of substantial hourly subsidies to low wages (Rewarding Work, 1995) and a universal basic income, an idea that "has begun to make a good deal of headway among progressive academics and politicians in Europe" (p. 211). Ackerman and Alstott are "even more positive about this plan than Phelps's important initiative". What is the difference? 80.000 dollars in one go versus 4.000 dollars per year. "Of course, any lump sum can be converted into an equivalent stream of annuity payments, and vice versa. But basic-income proposals typically do not allow recipients to 'cash out' their stream of payments by pledging them to a bank in exchange for a big cash payment." (p. 212) This might be justified either on the ground that Joan at 21 is not really the same person as Joan at 40 or on frankly paternalistic grounds as a way of preventing people from "wasting" their stake. To accommodate the underlying anxieties, Ackerman and Alstott want the stake to be paid in four installments to the young and supplemented by a citizen's pension for the elderly, and they replace the \$ 80.000 stake by a \$ 4.000 basic income for all school dropouts. But "small amounts dribbled out annually never really encourage the kind of sober reflection that stakeholding invites", and they therefore want to stick, for the majority, to a major endowment at the start. "The basic income cushions failure; stakeholding is a launching pad for success." The close relationship between basic income and Ackerman and Alstott's proposal was already stressed by Edwin Morley-Fletcher at BIEN's Amsterdam Congress (September 1996) in his farewell address as a co-chairman of BIEN.

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DE WISPELAERE, Jurgen. "Universal Basic Income: Reciprocity and the Right to Non-Exclusion", Citizen's Income Trust Occasional Paper, Citizen's Income Study Centre (St Philips Building, Sheffield Street, London WC2A 2EX, citizens-income@lse.ac.uk), March 1999, 23 p.

The notion of fairness as reciprocity — or "doing one's bit if one can" — is intuitively plausible, even if a number of difficulties restrict its moral force and practical relevance. One major moral challenge to basic income is therefore whether it can be incorporated into a social arrangement that remains faithful to the intuitive appeal of the reciprocity principle. In this essay, de Wispelaere, a PhD student at the London School of Economics argues that it can, providing one starts from an equal right to non-exclusion to determine the fair allocation of scarce jobs and the corresponding fair distribution of benefits, and subsequently brings in efficiency considerations. Non-job-holders are then viewed as "contributors by restraint", and no exploitation of job-holders by non-job-holders is involved.

(Author's address: London School of Economics, Department of Government, J.De-Wispelaere@lse.ac.uk.)

HUNYADI, Marc & Marcus MAENZ, "Does 'Real-Freedom-for-All' Really Justify Basic Income?", in Swiss Political Science Review 4/1 (1998): 45-65.

According to the authors of this thorough critical essay, Philippe Van Parijs's *Real Freedom for All* "offers a moral justification of basic income susceptible of standing up the most thorny moral questions". Yet, it rests on an inadequate notion of real freedom. The latter should not be understood, as it is by Van Parijs, as the counterfactual freedom to do what one might want to do, i.e. by reference to some notion of potential desire. It should rather be defined on the basis of some notion of basic needs, which a well-

ordered society should satisfy, and of a notion of social mediation in the assessment of individual preferences. This would reestablish a relationship between freedom and desire and thereby take into account the conception social actors have of their own freedom far more adequately than Van Parijs's excessively abstract conception of real freedom.

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STANDING, Guy. Global Labour Flexibility: Seeking Distributive Justice. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, 404pp.

The 20th century has been the century of the labouring man. Much of its social and economic policies have been dominated by competition between two models for providing the labouring man with a number of distinct forms of security. Both state socialism and welfare state capitalism offered labour security with constrained liberty. In the last quarter of the century, both models have faded, and the result has been the regrowth of pervasive socio-economic insecurity. This has been a reflection of a second "Great Transformation", to use Karl Polanyi's phrase, in which the economy has been disembedded from society. When the economy is embedded, the existing mechanisms for redistribution and regulation ensure that the benefits of economic growth are redistributed sufficiently to limit insecurity and inequality. When the character of the economic system changes, those mechanisms can become ineffectual or even dysfunctional. Globalisation, labour market flexibility and supply-side economic policies have transformed societies to such an extent that old-style welfare state policies have been in disarray, while socio-economic fragmentation has been eroding their legitimacy.

In this major book, the culmination of several years of research, Guy Standing, co-chairman of BIEN and high-ranking ILO official, provides a synthetic overview of global labour market trends and the accompanying trends in social policy, towards greater selectivity, privatisation and multi-tierism. He shows how social democrats and other reformers have embraced the "new paternalism" in moving towards workfare and its "Third Way" variants. The book concludes by suggesting that the challenge for the next decade will be to re-embed the economy by means of new forms of redistribution. Combining real freedom for all citizens and work flexibility will require moving towards basic economic security, through a citizenship income of some kind, economic democracy and more effective voice regulation of labour and social relationships.

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VAN DONSELAAR, Gijs, "The Freedom-Based Account of Solidarity and Basic Income" in Ethical Theory and Moral Practice (Kluwer Academic Publishers) 1, 1998, 313-333.

As expounded in his *Real Freedom for All* (Oxford, 1995), Philippe Van Parijs's "real-libertarian" conception of justice is simultaneously committed to a principle of self-ownership and to a principle of solidarity with the handicapped. But this dual commitment rests on an inconsistent notion of freedom as self-determination and as bargaining power. This inconsistency affects inter alia the justification he offers for the introduction of an unconditional basic income.

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WILLIAMS, Andrew. "Resource Egalitarianism and the Limits to Basic Income", Economics and Philosophy (Cambridge University Press) 15, 1999, 85-107.

This carefully drafted article offers a critique of Philippe Van Parijs's systematic ethical justification of basic income (in *Real Freedom for All*, Oxford 1995) from within Van Parijs's own liberal-egalitarian perspective. Williams has two distinct objections which converge in shrinking the justifiable level of the unconditional basic income far below the level Van Parijs claims to have justified. On the one hand, Van Parijs's case rests on the notion that the market value of whatever external resources we are given should be distributed so as to maximize the share of those who receive least. Employment rents can be considered part of the value of these gifts, and under present conditions a sizeable unconditional basic income would therefore seem to be justified. But Williams finds the rationale for the proposed value metric inadequate. If the only reason for choosing market values is that they generate, under appropriate conditions, an "envy-free" distribution of endowments, then the redistribution of employment rents to people who prefer not to work cannot be justified along this track. On the other hand, Van Parijs admits that the maximin distribution of the value of gifts does not exhaust the requirements of justice, but needs to be supplemented by a principle that would address the unequal distribution of internal resources (handicaps, etc.). Williams emphasizes difficulties with Van Parijs's principle of "undominated diversity", which is meant to fulfill this function, and suggests that the just compensation of handicaps is

likely to require a more generous scheme of differentiated benefits, and hence impose a tighter constraint on basic income maximisation than Van Parijs believes. "Advocates of basic income, however, should not be dispirited by [his] conclusions. As stressed initially, neither objection implies that their proposal is inherently unjust. Furthermore, defenses of basic income other than Van Parijs's resource egalitarian case remain open." Andrew Williams is also the coordinator of a volume of critical essays on Van Parijs's *Real Freedom for All*, which has been accepted for publication by Macmillan.

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FRENCH

BARRILLON, Michel & LUZI, Jacques eds., Utopies économiques, special issue of Agone. Philosophie, Critique et littérature (BP 2326, F-13213 Marseille cedex 02) 21, 1999, 228p.

Opened by Herbert Marcuse's essay on "The end of utopia", this special issue of the dynamic Marseilles-based journal *Agone* collects a number of attempts to formulate utopias that might be relevant to the present world. Three of them propose variants of basic income. "Utopie pour le temps présent" (pp. 90-103), by Philippe Van Parijs (University of Louvain), is a substantially updated version of his contribution to a hearing at the European Parliament 1986. "Le revenu universel. Un antidote à l'apartheid global" (pp. 105-118), by Myron J. Frankman (Mc Gill University, Department of Economics, frankman@heps.lan.mcgill), presents a genuinely universal basic income as an essential component of the response to massive migratory pressures. And "L'économie distributive" (pp. 119-136), by Marie-Louise Duboin (director of La Grande relève) briefly presents the central tenets of the so-called "distributist" project, which combines monetary reform, a participatory economy and a basic income. (Editors' address: *Agone*, Domaine du Terras, BP 2326, F-13213 Marseille cedex 02, agone@lisez.com.)

BOUCHAT, Thérèse-Marie & DEFEYT, Philippe. 1999. Le droit d'être actif. Pour une écologie du temps. Gerpinnes (Belgium): Quorum, 1999, 118 p., ISBN 2-87399-069-4.

Jointly authored by a young sociologist (Bouchat) and by the leader of the green group in the Parliament of the Wallone region (Southern Belgium) and economic guru of Belgium's francophone green party ECOLO (Defeyt), this book aims to make a set of proposals that promotes the possibility for each person to develop a wide spectrum of paid and unpaid activities. One central element of the package is the introduction of an individual refundable tax credit of about 200 Euro per adult and per month, irrespective of income and family situation. This would increase the incomes of the poorer households, facilitate the individualisation of social security payments and the taxation of earnings, and make the income tax schedule more transparent. It "can also constitute the first step in the introduction of a universal basic income", and the others hope it will, "for such a reform, by uncoupling more and more income and work, would significantly contribute to facilitating the exercise of a diverse set of activities." (pp. 50-52)

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BRESSON, Yoland. 1999. "Il faut libérer le travail du carcan de l'emploi", Le Monde 16.3.1999.

In this short piece, Yoland Bresson, chairman of the French basic income network AIRE, defends his "left-liberal project" whose core consists in a modest but strictly individual and unconditional "existence income" of about 250 Euros. Others, he says, argue in favour of a "sufficient" basic income of 600 Euros (over a third of GNP per capita). But this would only be feasible if most other public expenditures were curtailed, including social insurance and public education — which Bresson himself regards as undesirable. His own more modest left-liberal version could, moreover be generalized on a world scale. A 1% Tobin tax on capital flows, he reckons, would yield nearly 12 billion Euros. With a worldwide poverty threshold of slightly over one Euro, an existence income financed in this way could do a lot of good, even taking significant world governance costs into account.

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CASTEL, Robert, GODINO, Roger, JALMAIN, Michel & PIKETTY, Thomas. 1999. "Pour une réforme du RMI", Notes de la Fondation Roi Baudouin 104, février 1999, 48p.

This issue in the series of opuscules published by the influential Fondation Saint Simon (directed by Pierre Rosanvallon) is a significant contribution to debate on basic income within the French centre-left. It opens with a proposal by Roger Godino, a former collaborator of Michel Rocard and currently an occasional adviser to the French finance minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn ("Pour la création d'une allocation compensatrice de revenu", pp. 7-20). The "compensatory benefit" he proposes aims to suppress

the unemployment trap created by the RMI, to reduce income inequalities and to provide a systematic encouragement to part-time work. It consists in a household-sensitive negative income tax, with an income guarantee at the current levels of the means-tested guaranteed minimum income or RMI (28800 FF for a single person, 43200 FF for a couple) and a claw-back rate of 36%, which yields a zero transfer for a single person at the level of the full-time guaranteed minimum wage (80000 FF). With the help of David Spector (spector@mit.edu), Godino has worked out that this would about double the cost of the RMI and reach an additional 1.3 million singles and 1.4 couples (out of the 1 million households who currently get the RMI, only 0.2 consist of couples).

Godino's proposal is followed by three comments. Trade Unionist Michel Jalmain prefers a more targeted approach. Sociologist Robert Castel ("Minima sociaux, allocation compensatrice de revenu et RMI", pp. 39-48), one of the keenest advocates of the RMI, restates his fierce opposition to an unconditional basic income (which "runs the risk of working as a powerful factor in the deregulation of the labour market"), but he warmly welcomes Godino's negative income tax: the proposal is "simple, easily and quasi-immediately applicable and has a reasonable financial cost", it is compatible with the maintenance of a guaranteed minimum wage, does not clash with any powerful interests and above all it "could contribute to dynamising the RMI by correcting a serious perverse effect of its current functioning and would facilitate a return to employment". Economist Thomas Piketty ("Allocation compensatrice de revenu ou revenu universel", pp. 21-29) also welcomes Godino's proposal as a way of fighting the unemployment trap by enabling the beneficiaries of the RMI to take on (in particular part-time) work with a higher net pay. But he points out that another measure would do the job: the introduction of an unconditional basic income ("allocation universelle"). "From a strictly economic standpoint, these two proposals are totally equivalent... The important question is which of these proposals is likely to be best perceived politically and socially." In his view, a basic income has two advantages over Godino's proposal. First, it is likely to involve less stigmatization for households receiving a "partial RMI" (even though, with a basic income, the stigma may shift e.g. to the non-payment of income tax). More important, a basic income would give absolute security to the people receiving it, whereas the entitlement to the RMI (or part of it) under Godino's scheme would be subject to a means test that may be constantly lagging behind the potential beneficiaries' current situation: "As working for a couple of months may make me lose access to the RMI for several terms at the end of this period, why should I bother to take the risk?"

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CONSEIL CENTRAL DE L'ÉCONOMIE, "Allocation universelle et réalité économique", in Lettre mensuelle socio-économique (Avenue de la Joyeuse Entrée, 17-21, B-1040 Bruxelles), février 1999, 12p.

This issue of the monthly newsletter of Belgium's consultative "Conseil central de l'économie" (which includes representatives from the Unions, the employers and other organisations) contains a presentation and discussion of the case for an unconditional basic income presented by Jean-Marc Ferry (a French philosopher teaching at the Université libre de Bruxelles). The way Ferry has elaborated his reflection on basic income is said to be very close to the concerns of the "Conseil central de l'économie". The paper also refers the recent microsimulations performed by Isabelle Terraz and Christophe Joyeux, also from the Université libre de Bruxelles [see BI 31, Winter 1999], while stressing that they do not take the behavioral variable into account.

HERLAND, Michel. 1999. "Peut-on disjoindre le revenu du travail? Une approche historique", L'Europe en formation 311, hiver 1998-99, 49-70.

After a quick run through the history of the idea of a guaranteed income and of its critics (such as Turgot or Malthus, who regarded it as a dangerous encouragement of idleness), the author restates his commitment to a combination of a social dividend ("minimum social garanti") and a compulsory social service ("service civil"), as advocated by Alexandre Marc and his "federalist" movement.

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KREMER, Pierre & SZMULEWICZ, Daniel. 1999. "Le revenu d'existence pour tous: la solution?", in Fraternelle. Le journal de l'engagement responsable (ZI le Vaillant, Bât. A10, 2 rue Jean Moulin, F-93350 Le Bourget, France) 43, avril 1999, 4-5.

In his most recent book (La richesse des hommes. Vers une économie quaternaire, Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997), the French sociologist Roger Sue argues that employment will be less and less the centre around which our societies are structured. A review of his thesis provides a background for the expression of two contrasting positions on basic income: Kremer believes it may well benefit the privileged more than

anyone else, while Daniel Szmulewicz, in the light of all he heard at BIEN's 1998 Amsterdam Congress, finds it a "realistic alternative".

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SIROIS, Charles. Passage obligé. Passeport pour l'ère nouvelle. Montréal: Les Editions de l'homme (www.edhomme.com), 1999, 158p., ISBN 2-7619-1490-2.

Charles Sirois is the head of a fast-growing Québec-based telecommunication business which is active worldwide. He has just published a small book in which he aims to explain to a broad audience the world view that underlies his innovative activities. What about getting rid of the safety net — he asks a few pages from the end (pp. 147-149) — and replacing it by a "guaranteed minimum income" paid to every adult, rich or poor, man or woman, young or old, without any of the entitled having to "prove" or "justify" anything? Its level would be lower than Canada's current minimum wage but higher than current social assistance. It would be made a part of taxable income, but those with no other income would pay practically no tax. Social assistance, unemployment insurance and state-organised old-age pensions would be abolished, but any income from work would be fully combinable with the basic income. What would be the outcome? "A more responsible citizen would gain more autonomy and more freedom, and thereby acquire a greater propensity to create and innovate, and a greater ability to adapt to the rapid changes that characterise today's world." (p.149). Along with Pierre Bergé (Liberté, j'écris ton nom, Paris, 1991) and Roland Duchatelet (NV België, Ghent, 1994) for example, this is yet another top businessman who falls for basic income.

GERMAN

APPEL, Margit & BLÜMEL, Markus eds. 1998. Soziale Grundrechte - Kriterien der Politik. Thaur-Wien-München: Verlagshaus Thaur (Krumerweg 9, A-6065 Thaur), 176 p., ISBN 3-85400-084-7.

Published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, this non-technical collective volume on fundamental social rights is an initiative of Austria's catholic social academy, which has been at the forefront of the basic income discussion in Austria since the publication of Grundeinkommen ohne Arbeit (1985) by Herwig Büchele SJ and Lieselotte Wohlgenannt. Basic income is explicitly and sympathetically discussed by several contributors to the collective volume, including BIEN's founding member Lieselotte Wohlgenannt ("Recht auf Arbeit - Recht auf Einkommenn") and Luise Gubitze, an assistant professor in political economy at Vienna's Economic University ("Grundsicherung oder Grundeinkommen als konkretisierung der Menschenrechte"), who concludes: "A basic income could be a basis for economic and cultural multiplicity and for the rise of a political community which would civilize economic communities."

Editors' address: Katholische Sozialakademie Oesterreichs, Schottenring 35/0, A – 1010 WIEN 1, Austria, ksoe@ping.at)

BECK, Ulrich. 1999. Schöne neue Arbeitswelt. Vision: Weltbürgerschaft. Frankfurt am Main & New York: Campus (Buchreihe der Expo 2000 Hannover), 256 p., ISBN 3-593-36036-5.

In the essay that makes up most of this volume ("Das Modell Bürgerarbeit", pp. 7-189), the renown sociologist Ulrich Beck (University of Munich and London School of Economics) presents and defends his proposal of "civic work" (Bürgerarbeit), coupled with a "citizen's income" (Bürgergeld). Owing to technological change and the globalization of capital, he predicts, West European societies are in the process of being "brazilianised": a fast growing proportion of their members have to rely, for their subsistence, on the precarious, intermittent performance of waged labour (pp. 185-189). To prevent the development of deep cleavages, it is essential to organise active democratic participation by all into civic work (self-determined voluntary political and social activity, or self-organised services for third parties within the framework of public sector firms), a new source of activity and identity. Every man and woman who so wishes must be able to get access to at least a part-time paid job, but also to perform civic work and get social recognition in this way too through the payment of a citizen's income at a level no lower than current levels of social assistance and unemployment benefit (p. 133). This relieves the State of the task to promise and provide waged employment to all (p. 146), and at the same time helps the low-skilled into waged employment by giving them an opportunity to develop and display their skills and by substituting the valued status of a "civic worker" for the stigmatized situation of an unemployed (p. 149). The implementation of this doubly conditional "citizen's income" — conditional upon both the performance of civic work (Bürgerarbeit) and the non-performance of standard work (Erwerbsarbeit) — raises no doubt countless practical problems (where exactly does the border lie, and what about part time combinations, for example), some of which Beck is fully aware of but makes no claim to solve (p. 132).

(Author's address: Universität München, Institut für Soziologie, München, Germany.)

GERWIEN, Tilman. 1998. "Die Zukunftsmacher. Wege aus der deutschen Krise", in Stern 29, 63-72.

A brief presentation, by a handful of academics of what they see as the central problem in Germany's social system and how they propose to solve it. One of them is the sociologist Ulrich Beck (Munich), who proposes a citizen's social service (Bürgerarbeit) paid by the state in the form of a "citizen's income" (Bürgergeld) in voluntarily formed service agencies active in niches not occupied by the private sector. Another is economist Joachim Mitschke (Frankfurt), who proposes a "citizen's income" (Bürgergeld), in the form of a negative income tax, as a way of subsidising low-paid work.

(Joachim Mitschke's address: JW Goethe Universität, Fachbereich Wirtschaftswissenschaften, Mertonstrasse 17, Postfach 11 19 32, D-60054 Frankfurt-am-Main)

HABERMAS, Jürgen. 1994. "Ein Gespräch über Fragen der politischen Theorie", in Die Normalität einer Berliner Republik, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995, 135-164.

In this joint interview for the Swedish journal Res Publica (3, 1994, 36-58) and the Dutch journal Krisis (57, 1994, 75-85), the influential social philosopher Jürgen Habermas is asked what he thinks of the idea of a basic income, as advocated for example by André Gorz and Claus Offe. Here is his reply: "The idea of a basic income, as discussed in the 1980s, is definitely interesting in so far as it would make the material basis for the citizen's self-esteem and political autonomy independent from the private person's more or less contingent success on the labour market. But these things could only be meaningfully assessed in relationship with the complicated tasks of a reconstruction of the welfare state, which is currently at risk of being dismantled." (p.146)

(Author's address: JW Goethe Universität, Fachbereich Philosophie, Dantestrasse 4-6, D-60054 Frankfurt-am-Main)

MATTHES, Britta & Georg VOBRUBA. 1997. Konsequenzen der neuen Ergebnisse von Längsschnittanalysen zur Einkommensmobilität für das Konzept einer negativen Einkommenssteuer, Düsseldorf: Hans-Böckler-Stiftung (Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz 3, D-40227 Düsseldorf), Manuskripte 211, January 1997, 38p.

Both fans and foes of basic income or negative income tax commonly attribute to them both access-to-employment and exit-from-employment effects. In this programmatic working paper published by the educational foundation of the German trade Union federation (DGB), Matthes and Vobruba argue that such attributions could and should be assessed by using existing data about individual mobility between unemployment and various types of employment. The proof, of course, is in the pudding. But it is left for another occasion.

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OPIELKA, Michael. 1997. "Leitlinien einer sozialpolitischen Reform", in Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (Fleischstrasse 62-65, 54290 Trier) B 48, 21 November 1997, 21-30.

The outline of a reform of German social policy, including a citizen's income, but also an emphasis on a citizen's duties.

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BASIC INCOME

is an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement.

THE BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK (BIEN)

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