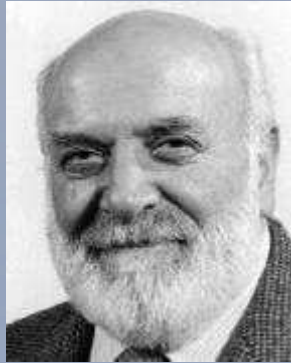


**"To guarantee a life in dignity, material security
and full participation in society"**

**Unconditional basic income: an effective
means of tackling (hidden) poverty and
promoting freedom for all and democracy**

by Ronald Blaschke, April 2014



Altiero Spinelli

**“Manifesto of Ventotene”
 (“For a Free and United Europe.
 A Draft Manifesto”, 1941)**

“Human solidarity towards those who succumb in the economic battle ought not, therefore, be shown with the same humiliating forms of charity that produce the very same evils they vainly attempt to remedy: rather it ought to take a series of measures which unconditionally guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone [...]. In this situation, no one would any longer be forced by misery to accept unfair work contracts.”



Martin Luther King

**“Where do we go from here:
Chaos or community?” 1967**

“Two conditions are indispensable if we are to ensure that the guaranteed income operates as a consistently progressive measure.

First, it must be pegged to the median income of society, not at the lowest levels of income. To guarantee an income at the floor would simply perpetuate welfare standards and freeze into the society poverty conditions.

Second, the guaranteed income must be dynamic; it must automatically increase as the total social income grows.

[....]

Without these safeguards a creeping retrogression would occur, nullifying the gains of security and stability.”

André Gorz



“Inadequate minimum income guarantees are a subsidy to the employer: they enable him to pay his employees less than the living wage for the work they do.” (2003)

„The guarantee of a basic income below the subsistence minimum has the function to force the unemployed people to accept dirty, low-status jobs on the cheap. This corresponds to the neo-liberal position of the advocates of Milton Friedman.“ (2000)



Michael Opielka/Heidrun Stalb

**"The guaranteed basic income
is an essential, but ist not
enough"(1986)**

**„A basic income must be sufficient, so that poverty is eliminated
and participation at the socio-cultural life is guaranteed.
A low basic income would actually mean forced labour.“**

Structure

Preliminary Note

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Terms and definitions

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Unconditional basic income: an effective means of tackling (hidden) poverty and promoting freedom for all and democracy

Chapter 3

Why the partial basic income does not eradicate income poverty and hidden poverty and does not promote true freedom for all and democracy adequately or indeed at all

Conclusion and thoughts on the way forward

Preliminary Note

**I am speaking about situation in Europe,
not about the situation in countries of the Global South.**

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

Two types of minimum income:

- **basic / minimum security provisions** (also known as basic social allowances, basic security, welfare benefit, social assistance ...)
- **unconditional basic income**

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

basic / minimum security provisions

- **(social-administrative) means-tested**
- **not individually guaranteed**
- **associated with forced labour (a breach of human rights and international law) or services in return**
- **do not (usually) guarantee material security (existence) and participation in society, do not eradicate poverty and hidden poverty**

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

Unconditional Basic Income (UBI)

- **not (social-administrative) means-tested**
- **guaranteed individually to everyone**
- **without pressure to engage in work, forced labour or services in return**
- **unconditionally guarantee material security (existence) and participation in society**

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

The Unconditional Basic Income Europe (UBI E) network defined UBI as an amount of money

- **paid on a regular basis to each individual**
- **unconditionally (not means-tested, without forced labour...)**
- **universally (everywhere, everyone)**
- **high enough to ensure a material existence and participation in society**

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

partial basic income

- **partial basic income is *partial* because it *does not* meet the criterion of unconditional basic income:**

“high enough to ensure a material existence and participation in society”

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

poverty

- **poverty means here “income poverty”
= a life in dignity and participation in society is not possible**
- **poverty risk threshold is defined by the EU:
“risk of poverty threshold is 60 per cent of median
equivalised net income”**

poverty risk threshold in 2014 (projected) for example in:

France – above EUR 1080 net/month

Belgium – above EUR 1060 net/month

Germany – above EUR 1030 net/month

Poland – above EUR 300 net/month

Romania – above EUR 120 net/month

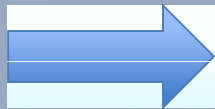
Note: If median income in the country is low, check with basket of goods and services.

Chapter 1

Terms and definitions

hidden poverty

- **poverty due to non-take-up of (supplementary) basic / minimum security provisions**



caused by *conditionality* of social cash transfers

**Conditionalities deter people from taking up their entitlements.
Some causes are:**

- **shame to be a poor man in public view**
- **entitlement is unknown**
- **important cause: conditional transfers systems are repressive and bureaucratic**

Chapter 2

Unconditional basic income: effective means of tackling (hidden) poverty and promoting freedom for all and democracy

An Unconditional Basic Income (UBI)

- **eradicates income poverty and hidden poverty**
- **combats forced labour**
- **gives people the freedom to choose what work they do and to play their part, without coercion, in shaping society and the world of work (democracy)**
- **economic independence within the family and partnerships**
- **is fundable by**
 - redistribution of wealth from rich to poor and
 - saving of most existing basic / minimum security provisions

Chapter 3

And a partial basic income?

A partial basic income

- **does not eradicate income poverty and hidden poverty**
- **does not remove the coercion to engage in work**
- **does not allow people to play their part, without coercion, in shaping society and the world of work**
- **does not make for economic independence within the family and partnerships**
- **does not independent of social bureaucracies**
- **can be used for neo-liberal goals: reduction/abolition of welfare benefits and social minimum standards**
- **frightens off a lot of potential allies**

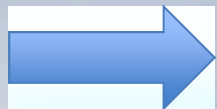
Conclusion

Unconditional Basic Income is an effective means of tackling poverty and hidden poverty and promoting freedom for all and democracy, the partial basic income not.

Thoughts on the way forward

Steps to eradicate poverty **and to introduce UBI are possible for each life-time stage:**

- **adequate basic income for all children (childhood / youth)**
- **abolition of forced labour and individualisation of existing basic / minimum security provisions, adequate level (unemployed)**
- **adequate basic income for sabbatical (employed)**
- **adequate universal basic pension (pensioner)**



Steps are supported by many allies and help to gain acceptance the UBI within society.

A photograph of a clear blue sky with several wispy white clouds scattered across it. The clouds are most prominent in the lower half and center of the frame.

Thank you.