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MARCUS BRANCAGLIONE

# **UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME**

MARCUS BRANCAGLIONE

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*I dedicate this English version of this short  
essay to my friend and sister in letters and ideals,  
Fabi.*



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<https://medium.com/marcus-brancaglione/renda-b%C3%A1sica-universal-67cbd116542e#.ppo4piidq>

## Preface to the English version

So my friend Marcus asked me to write the foreword to the English version of this book. And who am I exactly, other than an amateur translator capable of rendering passable English? I am a nobody. To be more precise, I am a someone whose only current role in this excuse for a society of beings that claim themselves to be knowing and sentient is to be myself and to do what I like to do. Which is to think, to write, and to figure out a way, to try to see and to understand how to actually change something, in me and in the world.

After reading the book, I may have understood why he invited me. Perhaps he did so precisely because I am a nobody. As Marcus teaches us, salvation comes only from those who need to be saved. The truly universal, non-discriminating, solidarity-based, global Basic Income will be conceived by, then created, paid for and received by the very same people, which are we, the nobodies of the world. Charles Eisenstein, one of my favorite writers, also claims to be a nobody in the realm he writes about, and he writes about literally Everything. And that nobodiness, he claims, is perhaps what signals the closeness of the vision of a new, more beautiful world he writes about.

I may be a nobody in the Basic Income Movement, or in any kind of politics, sociology, anthropology, economics or even social activism, but if Marcus Brancaglione's core insight is correct, then a Basic Income can only be made real by the additional involvement of the "everyone else," the nobodies. It will only happen when the nobodies, the 99.9%, both speak and listen directly from and to each other, without depending

on intermediation by any sort of 0.1%, which are the people we are always going to see on the bookshelves, radio, TV and the big internet outlets. And as the Basic Income ideal goes, this is not about getting rid of the 0.1%, but of paying a Basic Income for them too, that is, guaranteeing a share of voice, of play time to everyone. The revolution is from the 100% and to the 100%. Everyone gets their share of voice, and there are billions of diverse voices to listen from, instead of everyone turning to their dystopian Tele-Visions to listen to some State-corporate expert authority's opinions on specifically how the whole of humanity should sabotage themselves today in order to better keep serving what Heather Marsh (another author you need to read) calls the age-old Ponzi schemes of power and celebrity.

What is an "income," what is "money" other than a convoluted symbolic game that maps to political power, and as such can be metaphorically seen as a "voice," as "speech"? Money is speech, so say the USian high courts. So the nobodies will speak freely, and that free speech will be their free economic ties, enabled by their own Basic Income network. The network that they will build and that they will fund. They, we, all of us, but mostly we, the nobodies, will politically and technically voice an Universal Basic Income into being, and that network of economy that we will create is what will enact our liberation. As Marcus painstakingly argues in this book, the other Basic Income, the classist, racist, xenophobic one, being concocted by the very logic that structurally denies, suppresses the emergence of this network of liberation, is not going to be your friend. I have argued with Marcus that, accidentally and in time it might, but I agree with him that it will not by its default design.

Marcus' writing provides the reader an inner glimpse of his life experience as someone who has once visited the village of Quatinga Velho, Brazil, and has implemented, together with Bruna Augusto and their NGO, ReCivitas, one of the first Basic Income pilots in the Southern Hemisphere. The book starts with his sensing that something is rotten in the kingdom of Basic Income Movement, as he realizes in horror his academic mistake of objectifying humans as guinea pigs of an economic experiment being carried out by unwitting replicators of an external, hierarchical structure of disempowerment. Marcus proceeds then to vividly expose his process of seeing truth upon truth of the matter, deconstructing fundamental concepts such as universality, unconditionality, properties and rights into their living, proto-spiritual quantum particles, and then culminates in a vision of a dystopian present world engineered, through its "social" systems, specifically to produce and to perpetuate oppression, deprivation and starvation. That is, we do not have systemic problems because we have erred in designing our systems, but because these problems are the designed result of our systems. All of them, including our favorite ones. And then, the book argues, if we want that machine to stop devouring people and planet, then something must change. And what must change is us. We, all of us, must stop being passive replicators of these games, and instead realize we have been psychologically trapped, duped into buying new version upon new version of the same principles that have excluded the majority of us from politically and economically existing since the beginning of hierarchical, exploitation, deprivation and genocide-based civilization on this planet.

Or have I read too much into his work? Am I extrapolating outside of what he said? Well, why don't you check out for yourself? I am not out to clone his thinking, nor anyone else's. What his writing has done to me was the same that the writing of all the great writers (those that are great because they have remained being nobodies even after they became known) I have read have done to me. I have become flared up, not in fanaticism, but in creativity. I have become more of myself. I have felt my inner connections broaden, expand, and reach new pockets of mystery that do not map to an external artifact I just assimilated. This book, like all pieces of great writing by the great nobodies of this world, are mantras, magic, tools, gateways. Human, live conversations. They are not dead knowledge, but doors, mirrors, food to an expansion of one's own insight.

This great piece of writing was not easy to read, nor to translate. It hurts, like it does all great writing that reveals the wounds, the pain we have as a society been struggling for aeons to cover up with distractions and cynicism. And it has helped me know more of myself, of my own power, and as such has also furthered my liberation, my letting go of what does not serve me no longer. I hope it can be the same to you. And I hope that our upcoming Universal Basic Income network can do the same to this aching, all too human world.

*Fabiana Reis Cecin*

# UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

## **I must admit, I was wrong**

I previously thought that the abyss that prevents the universal human right of Basic Income from being an exercised reality was merely an ethical one. It is not. That abyss is much deeper. It is a moral one.

I believed that the length of this abyss was essentially about the distance between discourse and its realization; that the nature of this hole was that of the gap between theory and practice.

I assumed, naively, that it would suffice to defeat the blockages of the political and academic demagogueries for the concept of Basic Income to spread around the world as a praxis.

I imagined that if we managed to plant this ideal far away from the reapers, as the seedling form of a new citizen's ethic, of a new ethic for social activism, that the fields of Basic Income would flourish. Nope.

But no, I am not saying that I have sown among stones. Our Basic Income pilot project in Brazil would have never existed if it were not for all the international solidarity it has received.

I don't even know how we would have survived without the help of our Bangladeshi friends in Rome, or of the Swiss

movement folks who have welcomed us in their homes when we essentially escaped Brazil, almost as political refugees. I do not know what our fate, or of our project, would have been, without their solidarity. And these are just some of them... how can I forget them?

However, I cannot close my eyes to the state of today's world as a whole. And in that world, we are few. Few who are willing to share the truth, to invest our time and money on all other human beings without judging them, discriminating them. Few fighting for humanity. And those on the opposite side are legion. So many serving armies, States, companies and their schemes. Millions of people sustain, forced or not, the investment of trillions of dollars in that industry of death and deprivation.

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## **Development? Development is undeniable. But is it for all?**

Yes, for sure there is development for those who live in the centers of the world, protected by the lords of war and capital. But where is the development for those who are considered the remainder of the world? For those who live in the outskirts, outside of the bourgeois bunkers?

What is new in globalization for those who will die in the name of the march of civilization and be erased of the white history of the world? What is this pain of globalization that is inflicted on them other than the plain old oppression of colonization,

merely dressed in new clothes? Or better put, just dressed in clothes slightly less drenched in blood?

The Basic Income movement has been growing, but it does not seem to be at all willing to face the fact of the enslavement of entire populations. Actually, let's be fair, it does not seem to be even willing to face the precarization of work head-on, let alone the International Division of Labor.

International Division of Labor! What a pompous euphemism for the plain old genocidal plundering through the mechanisms of capital. What a fancy word for the monopolization of access to natural resources, for the exploitation of those expropriated, deprived of access to their common good, to their natural habitat, their means of sustenance, from their births to their deaths.

I know that is seen as a radical point of view for many people, especially those who live in bubbles. I know that for bankers, politicians, technocrats and even academics that live out of and eat very well from the hand of this system, that radical point of view of the world is the one that has to be constantly erased and silenced. Although I can understand that these people are motivated by the defense of their privileges, what about those who do not actually sit in a comfortable position in the social pyramids of power? What about those who carry the pyramids on their backs, and that can read, write and understand? Or, what about those who do sit comfortably atop other people's backs, but swear they really care for them? How can we pretend we are not seeing all of that?

I do understand, therefore, the interests of the old defenders of national Basic Income programs. But what about those who now want to add the word "Universal" to their concept of Basic Income? What is it that you are feeling, what is it that you are seeing? What is your universe?

How can the idea of universality and of human rights truly for all humans, without distinctions, including nationalistic ones, sound so foreign, strange or utopian? How can that be, even to those who have never suffered famine and poverty nor saw them up close? How can they talk about universality while being unmoved by the meaning of what it is to be human on this planet?

It is obvious that Basic Income is not only about fighting poverty or material deprivation. That vision ignores the libertarian foundation of the concept. It is obvious that the Basic Income movement is about liberating all people, without any discrimination or segregation, from all primitive deprivation, from everything that denies them access to all of the common good. That is why I ask myself how a struggle for emancipation both political and economic can be subdued and sold to the status quo? How can it be reduced to the ideological framework that both deforms the ideal and miscarries its birth?

Do you think that the issue with the lack of Basic Income begins and ends with bad jobs and with the scarcity of paid work? That the ideal of Basic Income can be reduced to that?

No. The Basic Income is a libertarian and humanitarian ideal that cuts much deeper, that precedes the problematic symptoms arising from the depletion of yet another phase of

the capitalist production process. It has opposed this poverty-producing machine from a much earlier, much more fundamental position than that of technological unemployment. It is there, in the struggles and the revolutions against the worst crimes of statecraft and privatism: the crime of denying people's natural right to life and liberty, and the crimes of the outright oppression and murder of people, especially those who have no power to exercise their natural, legitimate right to self-defense.

The miracle of a human being that gets up and puts himself in the way of violence and deprivation imposed upon another, without expecting anything in return: where do you think that comes from? It comes from solidarity, my friends. It comes from the only thing that keeps our humanity alive, not as a charity, but as a dream, and as a revolt triggered by witnessing as our brothers and sisters are condemned to death. As they are sentenced to live senseless lives, working themselves to death. As they are condemned not because they were born short on luck, but because they do not belong to God's chosen people or their states. They will die for no reason other than their right to life being taken away from them. Not in theory, but in fact, as their rightful share of the common good that would fulfill their right to life is taken away from them: the share that was theirs simply because they exist.

Entire populations are robbed by their negligent and corrupt states that are allied to transnational companies and capital that monopolize, pillage their land and their natural resources. No sirs, all these riches are not being sent to outer space. All that is stolen by the corrupt, totalitarian politicians of poor countries, in collusion with their companies and armed forces is

used to support the consumptive drive of this oh-so-beautiful civilizing process that looks like a planet-devouring locust swarm.

No, I'm not bitter. On the contrary, I love a good fight. But it seems that a fight is all we are going to get. Today, humanity is as dry and arid as a riverbed that has been diverted from its natural course such a long time ago that it hardly remembers that one day it hosted intelligent and solidary forms of life, evolving and revolutionizing themselves.

And this is no criticism towards those who benefit from this system or are paid to sustain it. The fool is me and all others who have believed in white universality and humanity. The fools are us, those who continue to beg the wolves to shepherd us.

But they fool no one. They are openly defending the theses and proposals of humanity and of Basic Income that are more convenient to them. The fool is the one who lets himself be fooled, believing that these models, theses, proposals will reach us someday. That this Basic Income was really for all, as equals, and not merely as guinea pigs.

No, my friends, the Basic Income may even come for the citizens of developed countries, but for the bottom of the global pyramid it will not come without massive unity, solidarity and struggle for the excluded. It will not come unless we shout, with all our might, that we are not their objects of study, experimentation, use or employment. That we are people, and that we are equals in rights, living in and sharing the same world.

If we want to stop people from dying in refugee boats, in factories, in wars, in prisons, in every dead end of this world from where capital and labor only ever comes out and never in except for the occasional crumbs, we will have to rise up and not only become beneficiaries of a Basic Income, but creators of a Basic Income that is truly for all, without borders, without nationalistic or territorial distinctions. We will have to run our own pilot projects, and we will have to develop our own ideals. But what else did we expect? Liberty is never given, it is taken.

The Basic Income movement is an abolitionist movement. It is a movement for the liberation of all that, through a process of primitive deprivation, are forced to sell their labor to someone else who has more power than them. The relationship between the monopolizers of the common good and the expropriated is not that of work contracts, but of wage slavery. Unequal people in terms of possessions, of wealth are free to sell their work to each other. But whoever hires, profits or benefits from the subservient work of people who have been denied their share of the common good may not be a literal slave-owner, but is in fact living at their expense.

We were wrong, therefore, in not being very explicit about this extremely obvious point of view. I am not sure whether we skipped it because we thought this was way too obvious to be worthy of mention, especially among those who advocate for a Basic Income. I am not sure whether we, of ReCivitas, lacked either courage or vision then, but I do know what we are missing now: a new definition of Basic Income. A definition that will re-integrate its theses to the humanitarian and social ethics that can never be missing from it.

## But it's never too late to make it right

So far, we have been working as if the only problems with Basic Income were the lack of initiatives and, mainly, the development of applied methods. As if the problem could be reduced to a missing social technology that would put the available theory into practice. Now we know—mostly thanks to experimentation itself—that in addition to literature geared towards applied basic income, there is a shortage of theses and definitions that are sufficient to its realization.

I am not affirming that the approach of basic income as an independent policy backed by the paradigm of social activism allied to that of innovation and social technology is a mistake. We have indeed nailed that one, or otherwise we'd have been crushed a long time ago. But it is undeniable that we have erred in thinking that the simple realization of a model would be sufficient to inspire its replication. It did inspire, but not as a borderless ideal, not with the same social, humanitarian and libertarian spirit. Not with the breadth and reach we had hoped for.

As I said, we thought that all that Basic Income needed to fly was the machinery. A workable model. That showing that it works would suffice to bring it down from the ivory tower and to wrestle it from the endless mental masturbations of neoliberal apologists. I really thought that if we built, at last, the first projects that could take off and fly on their own, we could help to start that revolution. And no, I do not deny that, in a way, thanks to these projects the Basic Income is at last taking off. But I repeat, Basic Income is missing its essence: the

innovative and libertarian spirit, in the most profound and revolutionary sense of the word. In the sense that one Thomas Paine conceived of and understood: that of the liberation of politically and economically dominated peoples in order for them to build new worlds. Anything less than that is a compromise that we already know is only going to result in no effective liberation; just more of the same.

Don't get me wrong. This is not a break-up with allies that have more restricted views or proposals. On the contrary: it is a call for them to not lose the spirit of Basic Income from sight, for even within the most constrained initiative we should be able to uphold our common ideal.

I will not deny that we are progressing fast. A paradigm was broken with our small experiments and pilot projects. The utopia is finally becoming reality, in part because the old welfare state is breaking down and an alternative is needed. I should, therefore, be proud for being part of this still minuscule revolution that is coming. But I confess that I am not. Not only because it is all still too little, but because I see no universality in the Basic Income that is coming. I am no Diogenes to walk the earth, lamp in hand, looking for a truly cosmopolitan citizen. But I ask: Universal Basic Income? Universal for whom exactly, white man?

I know that speaking of practice and application of a basic income as if it needed studies and methods, as if there were techniques and strategies for its execution sounds like a stretch to many people, especially to two groups of them. The first are those who think it is sufficient to convince everyone that the basic income is a good idea, or to simply make it happen by

decree. The second are those who think the basic income is impossible as there is not enough for everyone and that's the end of it. In theory these two groups are completely distinct, but in practice their respective positions lead to the same place: nowhere. Both those who defend it and those who attack it without thinking can, in reality, hold hands, as both groups think Basic Income is nothing but distributing cash to people. An oversimplification that induces people to paralysis.

It is tempting to look at basic income as a standing egg. Something that looks impossible before someone does it, and easy after someone shows how it is done. But it is not really like that. I am not trying to sell difficulties; we are volunteers and would literally gain nothing from doing that. But to simply ignore the war behind social transformations is to ask to be shot down by the first shots fired by those who don't want to see them happen.

Be it, therefore, because we think it is very easy, or because we think it is completely impossible, the underlying, paralyzing presupposition is the same. Starting from that premise, it is no accident that so few projects, big and small, have managed to get off the ground and to continue existing, even in places where what is lacking is not money.

Sure, it is obvious that to build a basic income project we do not need a rocket scientist or, God forbid, social engineering. Dealing with people is no rocket science. It is really much simpler than that... and because of that, it is infinitely more difficult to make it work.

Basic Income is like marriage, or world peace. In theory it is very easy to explain, but in practice it is not so simple to make it work. The engineers of economics may never admit it; they can forever preach that their professions and studies are so much more complex than social relations or achievements, but statistics show otherwise. They can lie, but the data cannot.

If the Basic Income was so simple and easy as it looks, and if making it happen simply boiled down to good presentation and persuasion, then the Basic Income, as with world peace, would have happened a long time ago.

Allow me to show, right off the bat, what the first great problem with Basic Income is, because it is the same with every other ideal: in practice, the theory is always something else.

## **The theory of practice**

In reality, both the ideal and the essential are not only invisible, but insignificant to those who are not acquainted with (i.e., don't suffer) the state of famine that is a result from their deprivation. The basic income is like the freedom it represents: you are only aware of it through the absence of what was or should be guaranteed.

Hence it is not surprising that those who had the tact and the initiative to make basic income happen have been the small villages in Africa and Latin America. Power can even be created from the deprivation of knowledge. But knowledge is not power, it is sensibility and experience; it is made of suffering and compassion. Suffering creates brotherhood, solidarity and

universality, and it is in it that we discover how much we are all equals in vulnerability and through which we first build a communion of common perceptions and only then the community of knowledge.

**Knowledge is not something that can be parroted. It is co-signified by the presence of meaning, feeling and a connection with the other in their reality.**

Certainly that knowledge needs to be translated into the rigor of theses and rational methods, but it doesn't generate itself from mere propositions and experiments that are decoupled from its originating meaning and therefore lacking the original human and social connection. On the contrary, that translation should occur through ideals and sensible experiences that are aware of their sensibility and their humanitarian and socializing meaning. It is necessary, therefore, more than experimentation and rationality, or hypotheses and ideological presuppositions to realize ideals. Sensibility and solidary intelligence are needed.

I am not saying that only those who know famine and deprivation (material or psychological) have the capacity to get to know and realize an universal basic income, and I am certainly not saying that only in the poor places of the world there is enough sensibility for its development. That is a double lie. Not only there are people that are sensitive to poverty and segregation in the suburbs of the richest countries of the world as well as in the poorest, but enough people lying in the gutters at every corner of both worlds, offering plenty of opportunity for anyone willing to sensibilise themselves to it.

I am affirming that a conception of basic income that is not aware of the famine and deprivation present anywhere in the world has no capacity to truly understand basic income nor to arrive at a truly universal definition of it, not only as a praxis but as a set of ideas that this practice sorely lacks. That set of ideas that, as an hypothesis, does not look at reality as a mere field for validation of its falsities or verities, but that is made of the simultaneous integration of the practice and the theoretical-practical theses.

I am aware that the entire world is closing itself in fear and xenophobia. But that is still another reason for basic income to not surrender to that tendency. We see the world lifting concrete walls of prejudice, dividing itself along the lines of privilege. We see civil society, the world that considers itself civilized, hiding once again behind walls, guards and fences, turning away from those who live outside their neighborhoods and territories, while their armadas do their dirty work, away from their sight. But what about us, those who preach a so-called Universal Basic Income? What will we do? What will we put our sights on?

I see humanism and universalism retreating and surrendering to the old statism and nationalism. And we cannot simply watch our conception of universality lose its humanity and cosmopolitanism, being reduced and taken over as the peoples of the world are by nationalism and territorialism.

We cannot fall into the trap of a kind of pragmatism or political realism that in fact is neither a praxis nor a reality, but a

dystopia. We do not need a world-wide basic income or any other type of territorial totality to preserve the ideal of universality and make it happen. What we do need are societies that are open to the world. If through the ideal that is expressed in our theses we already renounce to that, and if we are content in only replicating the basic income as something reduced to fit the old, bankrupt model of the nation-state, then we are just going to go down with them and their fanatics.

To be fair, it cannot be said that our proposal is a departure from these old theses and definitions, because it is a reaffirmation of principles to extent the reach of the ideal. In fact, we have never completely fit in the old paradigm and have been, in practice, gradually distancing ourselves from it. And we have always dealt with the consequences of that with ease. And precisely because of that we have no issues with owning that these old paradigms and definitions have been very useful to us. However, although we have always known that we should never chain ourselves to them, today we have proof of how much beyond them we must go.

We are grateful to the sources of theory that we have drunk from to build our first models for the pilot project of Quatinga Velho. The theories then available were of supreme importance to the success of that experience. They might not have been enough to prove their propositions, but they were more than enough to demonstrate the validity of the applied basic income. However, as it was to be expected, these conceptions manifested, through experimentation, their inherent limitations.

First, of course, were methodological limitations, since such conceptions so far were not referenced, not even to applied basic incomes. But then other, more serious limitations manifested: conceptual limitations of the very definition of Basic Income.

When we started the Quatinga Velho pilot project, we used Vanderborg-Parijs' basic income definition. We knew from the start that basic income was not a label that we could just stick over something, but rather something arising from a rigorous procedure that bore the right to social action. Not in the eyes of experts, but above all in the eyes of those who would receive it. We knew that it was in the perception of those people from the community that received the basic income that it would lie, during the experiment, the consummation of this act with the full meaning we projected onto it. We knew that the conception of a basic income was not, therefore, just a little set of rules to follow and to work within.

The conception, the thesis, is the soul of the experiment, and not only it needs the body to take a concrete form and spring to life, but the body needs the conception that gives its vitality so that it will not only be an act that is empty of meaning. We knew that we needed to give birth to the meaning of experience beyond a mere observation of phenomena, as the realization of the new. A social and humanist parthenogenesis that would bring life to that ideal in its libertarian spirit. Any less than that would be intellectual masturbation and ideological falsification.

It is through the ideal that the free and voluntary wills rise up. An ideal is not a mere idea. It is a transcendental conception. It is the dream of the son that has not yet arrived. Of the person we have not yet become. Of the world that we do not have. It can be in principle an abstraction, a dream. But when it falls to earth and is faced with the real, with the famine and the deprivation, it must transform itself, it must be born and fight to exist, and it is that fight and that sensibility to the famine and the deprivation that will not only give a material shape to that ideal, but a new shape to that already revolutionary spirit.

The naturalist and humanist idealism is, in principle, a state of spirit which manifests itself as a sentiment, a will to transform, and as a profound nostalgia for the original. A longing for the new to be with us again, as if it was present with us before, but is now absent. It is a feeling that needs to be resignified into sensitive conceptions that are capable of not only translating its spirit, but of giving it a body, a concreteness in the real, existing world, and through that not only of incarnating the principle, but transforming it as it has its living experience.

And because we have not forgotten that while we learned, because we knew the fundamental role of the conception of ideals during their realization that is a light that is completely opposed to the principles that guide the new and their realizers, and because we knew how much a thesis can be the pre-conceptual framework that deforms and kills an ideal even before it can be born and grow, we have produced, simultaneous to the practice, a literature that can help the development of that practical-theoretical conception that is more attuned to basic income, and that proposes definitions

that are truer towards the practices that we have already developed and that we intend to continue developing.

## **Another vision, another definition**

From where we socially stand, down here, from grassroots action, the available definitions have run dry in what they could have contributed towards the realization of basic income; they have shown insufficient to express the ideal of basic income. They are not able to sensibelize nor reach those who most need the income, neither as a practice nor as an ideal.

Deep down, I think that the definitions were never been thought out to reach those who have nothing, no income, no guaranteed social protection nor a first-class citizenship. They never aspired to go beyond the borders that are closed off. Even when such borders are not closed shut, and even when we put aside Eurocentrism, that is, the closing of the borders of the "first world" to the peoples of the colonized "third," those timid and insufficient definitions of Basic Income do not encompass even the inner universe of such borders, even there failing completely in reaching an universality that is absolutely necessary to a definition of Basic Income that is faithful to the ideal. If you don't believe that, ask the citizens who, while inside the centers of the world, are still not first-class citizens of a national territory.

The current definition of Basic Income is afraid of itself. Of its own power of upending the world. Of how revolutionary the true basic income is. It is of no use to try to hide it and underestimate it. The enemies of mankind are not idiots. They

know exactly how their systems of exploitation work, far better than many of those who criticize them. Proving to them that the objections that they impose to the attainment of basic income are prejudiced and fallacious will not move anybody's position by one inch. Even worse is the development of definitions of basic income that start from these presuppositions, or that are intended as an answer to these objections that were not raised in order to be resolved. The function of these arguments about problems with Basic Income is not the search of a solution to them, but to be Gordian knots. Their function is to maintain everything tied up, just the way it is now, and to build models starting from these knots. And to drive the movement into losing itself and into tying itself up to what Basic Income is not and can never be: something that could possibly be a salvation of the system of exploitation based on primitive deprivation. And if what we create turns out to be that, then that creation will be anything but the restitution of the fundamental and natural right of peoples, and not Basic Income.

And it is in that sense that the definitions of Basic Income lack libertarian and universal potential. They seem to not carry the courage to tell the State and the Market, together, to go back to the hell which they came from, and to see itself for what it is: an instrument of abolition and of liberation.

The Basic Income that does not know itself and that does not manifest itself as liberation not from the lack of jobs or from the existence of bad jobs, but from damned forced work and from the death of those who are born without a way to survive, does not stand explicitly against involuntary servitude and

wage slavery. The segregation that divides and dominates us may even be called a "basic income" someday, but it will not be Universal. It will not know its libertarian and humanitarian spirit, and will probably not even escape from the cultural and geopolitical alienation that interferes with the principle of unconditionality.

The Basic Income that denies its vocation, that does not conceive itself as a liberation, will not reach the marginalized, the needy and the expropriated of the world, that do not have the courage to go to the frontlines of struggle against the exploitation of work and capital where this war against humanity produces its greatest innocent victims, is not the true Basic Income. It is instead an idea as old as religion and the State, it is tithe, alms or handouts, and the purchase of the alienated and fidelized among the chosen and protected. It is an instrument of power for the unequal, exercising authority over those who were deprived of fundamental freedoms. I am sorry; that kind of thing already exists.

It may sound like presumptuousness from my part, or a complete absurdity to say that an ideal so simple as the Basic Income may need another and better theoretical-practical conception. But it seems that there is a will to forget the historical roots of the crime of expropriation of the common good; roots that demand that the Basic Income not be a simple charity or assistance, but also the mutual aid between the excluded who therefore seek both the liberation and the restitution of the enjoyment of stolen natural rights.

As private initiative, the mitigation of that theft is urgent, but as collective action it cannot be any less than the proposal that we take back our common good. As social contract it cannot be any less than the agreement upon a mutual guarantee, between equals, of participation in the common properties.

The Basic Income will not be created by a seizing or cancelling of anyone's rights to property, by infringing upon the rights of every person of inheriting what they have come to own in peace, but by extending this recognition and this absolute protection to heritage and to the natural property that is common to all in order not to be consumed, but to be enjoyed in the exact measure of everyone's needs. It is through guaranteeing the fundamental right to possession and to preservation of everything that is absolutely necessary to everyone's lives, as environment and as vital means, that the inalienable right of participation in the commons as a property and heritage of all mankind be recognized as a natural and universal right that precedes any other right. That it be recognized as a social and humanitarian duty of guaranteeing the participation and enjoyment of the common good by all human beings to the measure of their needs. All that without necessarily tearing down everything that stands today, but instead by converting it in participations on revenues of national and transnational capitals.

To be more specific, it is not through the taxation of individuals that will arrive at the basic income, but through the process of reverse redistribution, restituting the shareholder control of the world's peoples over the territories they occupy, and paying the due social dividends to every person, calculating

those dividends using the gains of these properties as basis. In that way we arrive at a Basic Income that is a natural right and not a handout or a charity from plunderers that use the privilege of managing these properties that are not theirs so they can continue to expropriate them and build monopolies through public and private capitals in collusion.

But who believes in the Nation-States these days? Who believes that States will distribute anything for free, other than bullets and bombs at the peripheries of the world, be them inside or outside their territories?

I am no fool. They will never do it willingly.

Any Basic Income that originates from that system will necessarily uphold, support and reproduce this system of alienation and deprivation. And it is for that reason that the Basic Income, as a practice and as a movement, will not be built without the independent and voluntary social initiative of the expropriated themselves for its mutual and solidary creation. Without that independent social system we will never arrive at the restitution of our natural rights as duties and social contracts posed as unavoidable constitutional obligations of governments and companies. And even if we get to that point, if we lose that supplementary mutual help network, we will be left with no system ready to provide the basics wherever or whenever there is a shortage of shared resources that are enough to provide for everyone's basics.

Therefore, what Basic Income is not missing is a libertarian, ecological and humanitarian spirit. That spirit is there, hidden

in a way to not upset the powerful, aging as a Fourier waiting for his enchanted patron to make his fantasy come true.

So far, we have not been able to build the systems that we need so much in a truly universal scale. We have not yet completely escaped from the eternal utopia, and not because the masses have all been turned into imbeciles, but because the ideal of universality is so poor and delimited as the propositions and projects that manifest them. And I include myself as target of that criticism.

And for that reason I will repeat myself and spell it out:

No national or local Basic Income, if closed off to the world, will ever be an Universal Basic Income. And if that is not yet clear, allow me to continue being repetitive (until we either drop dead or start moving).

I am not affirming that States should not pay a Basic Income to the peoples whose property and wealth they hold or exploit. Or that small communities cannot pay nor receive Basic Income including from each other. On the contrary! I am saying that States, all of them, have the Basic Income as an obligation and a debt to all the peoples of the world.

The fact that universal rights are not restricted to national borders does not exempt the national states from complying with their humanitarian obligations outside of their territories. On the contrary, it forces them to honor debts and obligations to all peoples and individuals, not mattering their citizenship, origins or location.

The National States and their transnational corporations not only have the obligation to pay that social dividend to the ratio necessary for all to live free, peaceful lives inside the natural territories where they politically and economically control resources, but they also have an humanitarian co-responsibility shared with all the peoples of the world in restituting that natural right to every resident of the planet. And that is an obligation that is directly proportional to the exact measure of the privileges and of the natural wealth they extract through the exploitation of primitive deprivations of populations, and through the violent monopoly of those vital and environmental means, to be paid as taxes or as private and transnational capitals.

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There is absolutely no problem with governments and national states paying basic income, as long as they do so in truly universal and unconditional fashion. That their demagogues take that as a challenge: if the empires, tyrants, and the filthy rich of this world start guaranteeing any kind of basic income, I will swallow my words and will bend over until my butt is well raised for them. And no, you don't have to pay it from your own private property. It would suffice for it to be paid from the public budgets that don't belong to them, but that nevertheless are part of their privileges, subsidies, and are used to pay for their weapons and wars.

## **The upcoming Basic Income...**

Yes, the Basic Income is arriving. And it is, no doubt, an achievement. I'm not going to be grumpy or stupid about it just

so I can defecate over the cause I have given so much to. I admit: that is a hell of an achievement, and I doubt there is anyone else that is as happy as I am with it. After all, nobody has been literally investing their time and money, literally paying for that dream to happen, for as long as I have been. Actually, the Namibia folks would be the ones doing this for the longest, no? But what matters is that we cannot fall into jingoism. On the contrary, we have to rise up to our moral duty like the crazy, as we have been doing, and raise the following question: what the hell is that kind of Basic Income that has been thought of and is being discussed around these parts? "Universal" for whom? Yes, I see Basic Income coming. But for whom? And for what? What purposes and yearnings is it coming to address?

There is no ideal that cannot be emptied of its own terms and purposes and gradually replaced by others completely opposed to its original intent. And suddenly what I see is an ideal of liberation of alienated work, a guarantee of a free and dignified life being at risk of being reduced not only to practices that are completely contradictory to the political and economic emancipation that is inherent to Basic Income, but Basic Income being reduced to an instrument that does the reverse.

Unfortunately, I am under the impression that this new social technology, as with many others, is also being appropriated for other ends and walking towards purposes that are completely distinct to those that we, right at the beginning, worked so hard to get off the drawing board. Speaking like that I almost feel like a socialist, a so-called utopian by those who proclaim themselves scientific. What I see is those people dismissing and

distorting the Basic Income ideal to adjust it to the yearnings and precepts of the dictates of the obsolete, dystopian statism's old dogmas.

I know that it may look pointless to ask what is that kind of non-universal Basic Income that we're going to see. But between the absurdly obvious ideal that hardly can be dismissed without falling into inhumane or racist arguments and its realization there are more than obstacles. There are worldviews so distant and so separated by walls and borders as are the centers of the world and their marginalized and exiled peripheries.

And I hope to be wrong, but I see a certain naiveté and even a promiscuity between those who defend a Basic Income in places where political and civil liberties are not consolidated, but also support the use of Basic Income as a neoliberal tool of compensation for a world-wide process of elimination of rights and legislation that protect the working class. But if I am not wrong, that new stage of the process of global division of labor will only enlarge the gigantic abyss of exploitation that divides the rich peoples from the poor.

No, I do not see a Basic Income for all. Not for all of us. I do not see it coming or even being conceived for those who need it the most. For those who are dying or are being enslaved and conscripted by the criminal deprivation of being born without access to the basics for survival. No, I do not see the Basic Income being paid to those who suffer with the plundering and the destruction of human and natural resources. I do not see any project of restitution of that right wherever that

deprivation was, and still is, the most brutal and primitive. Where the common good of colonized and occupied peoples and territories is plundered by civilization. I see wars, I see invasions and refugees. But I do not see projects of Universal Basic Income.

What I see is governments taking the control of human and natural resources to the extreme. And after that, the apex of global dystopia: whatever bourgeoisie that comes to prevail in that battle at the rich countries, together with their slavedrivers in the poor countries, having a life of idleness by enjoying theirs and others' share of the common good, while the rest of the peoples of the world are turned into slaves in a giant concentration camp, where the cultural and natural richness of the world is extinguished faster than it already is today.

Yes, I do see a Basic Income, but it carries the "everyones" of always. Separated by borders and prejudices. I do see Basic Incomes coming, but not truly universal ones or ones open to universality, but ones rigorously nationalistic and closed off to national citizenships and territorial borders. A Basic Income so conceptually limited by walls and fences, so blind and so alienated of the reality of the world, so separated from humanity as our own nations are.

This article therefore marks our rupture not with our partners and friends, but with the old models and positions. It is a presentation of new definitions of Basic Income that we will adopt from now on and that we intend to use in all communities where we come to implement an unconditional

basic income that is truly geared towards universality, that is free from geopolitical borders and, in fact, free from any discrimination between human beings.

We had already ruptured with the passive positions that were based on the old conceptions of Basic Income, the stances of those who, apparently, were willing to wait for governmental and political will (and the resurrection of the dead) until the end of times. Now, our disruption is of the old conceptions of Basic Income themselves. In the next chapter, we elaborate on our new Universal Basic Income concept.

## **Basic Income: Definitions**

A Basic Income, by way of principle, cannot be submitted to any kind of discrimination. Therefore, by definition, it cannot hold any kind of segregation not only of race, gender, age and creed, but also of nationality or territoriality. In other words, the universality simply cannot be subjected to statisms or nationalisms. And that should be made explicit.

The definition of a true Basic Income must object to all forms of distinction, including of nationality, citizenship, territoriality or dwelling—it does not matter what institution fulfills that duty, nor the scope of its activity. And that means, in practice, that the payment system cannot, therefore, by definition:

- (i) exclude absolutely anyone inside the area covered by its current actual capacity;

(ii) close itself off to any specific locality and, therefore, has the duty to serve equally to all people inside of the territories controlled by their monetary and capital systems, according to the deprivations generated and valued by the cost of life.

Whoever possesses, regulates or benefits from the common good as monetary capital has as an humanitarian duty to create and finance the Basic Income payment systems inside the scope of their monetary systems to the exact proportion and measure that they reify the nature of these territories as capital.

Even with an alternative or supplementary Basic Income, that is, one instituted only through private resources and that therefore does not have as a duty to constantly expand its reach in order to serve everyone, it cannot determine:

(i) discriminatory objections or restrictions in order to block anyone inside the actual scope covered from joining the mutual protection system that conforms with the terms of that free society;

(ii) nor limits based on territorialities or localities (even when those are not geopolitical) to prevent its expansion towards those who meet the basic criteria for joining such societies.

Therefore, the only commitment that such Basic Income mutual societies can demand as a duty is that which is strictly necessary for the constitution of the capital that will finance

the equal participation of everyone in a contribution that is agreed upon by all participants. And although equitable contributions for the institution of a Basic Income that is equal for all would be the most fair kind of agreement, what determines the contributions and basic incomes is whatever is agreed upon by all participants and nothing else from nobody else.

Consequently, a Basic Income is a money sum paid equally to all people who are inside capitalist monetary systems by the economic stewards and political controllers of the natural resources as an inalienable social dividend that originates in the participation of each person in these capitalized common goods and that is never inferior to the cost of living. That sum can be supplemented, if necessary, by voluntary private contributions, established in a mutualistic fashion with rules and sums defined through consensus by the agreement of all participants.

The Basic Income is defined:

- (i) necessarily by the revenues available through public or common properties, being, therefore, a right of every human person in a capitalized society;
- (ii) and, in supplementary fashion, by the voluntary contribution of private parties, through mutual protection association or, in other words, with a right of participation only for those who associate to fund it.

The revenues of the common good are, therefore, inalienable. Of course that nobody can be forced to receive their share against their own free will, but there is no permanent forfeiture of that share, not even when explicitly consented, and thus it can be demanded at any time. So, any social contract of appropriation, renunciation or transfer of that participation is void because it is characteristically a slavery contract of the person and of any descendants they may produce.

On the other hand, the private contribution as defined by the social contract of those mutualistic societies, is up to the participants to decide in agreement. They will decide how much the contribution is, and how much the Basic Income payments will be. Since the participation of each is voluntary and the resources private, to whomever the agreement is not in their interest, they are free to abandon the society and start a competing one.

## Universalities

By definition, a Basic Income does not need to reach the totality of the world, but it does need to be, in principle, open to all people who are within its reach. That is, there may not be any preconceptions about the totality that are less than humanity itself. If A receives it and B doesn't, that is not because, in theory, it was pre-conceived that A possessed any distinction that made them belong, but because, in practice, the payment system, the social protection program cannot in fact reach B. Because if they do have the means to reach B, and they don't, then these systems are not universal, even if they are, in theory, open.

It does not matter which governmental or private institute proposes the realization of that human right: no such entity can discriminate and segregate any human being that is within reach the payment system, even if they live on the moon or are martians. If the capitals system reaches these territories, then anyone living on them has an inalienable right to a Basic Income that originates from them.

In other words, if a human life was discovered on the moon, that person would have absolutely the same human rights as all the earthlings, including that of a Basic Income. It is the duty of these earthlings that would be delimited by the ability of reaching the moon and, of course, the ability to pay whatever is sufficient for someone to survive there.

The right to a Basic Income corresponds to the enjoyment of a common heritage that is not only natural, but human. Any member of a family has the same rights of property and income, and that includes someone who, even if a bastard, discovers themselves to be a descendent of the same family.

The reserves of what is possible do not allow for extinction, stalling, conditionalities or segregation of any person that hold the equal right to life and liberty within the scope of a system of minimal guarantees for life. The reserves of what is possible limits only the quantities to be distributed and the reach potential of a system that cannot, ever, be restricted or closed off to its current possibilities, and instead has to be in a permanent state of expansion not only of amounts but of resources as they become available.

Due to reasons supposedly pragmatic, it is considered admissible that the definition of a Basic Income may be subjected to at least one condition: the geopolitical one. As if the existence of a Nation-State was an absolutely necessary condition for the realization of the right to a Basic Income. But it is not. And that primordial natural right cannot at all be subjected to any other national or state interests. But it is a duty of legitimate States, guaranteed through social contracts not only for humanitarian reasons, but as a pre-requisite for states of peace.

The right to a Basic Income is prior to that of States and nations. It does not necessarily require the apparatus of States and nations. In fact, it is not the Basic Income that needs to be subjected to statism, but lawful states must attend to a Basic Income guarantee to all peoples that they affect directly and indirectly, not only so they can maintain minimal legitimacy, but so that they do not commit a crime against the rest of the humanity that they expropriate.

A society or nation that establishes its State, territorial occupation, or business with the subsidies of violence monopolies does not do so based on any right, but merely through the supremacy of force and thus it can be stopped through legitimate defense by those who are deprived of their equal right to life, liberty and their shared properties.

It is fundamental that the precedence of that fundamental right is duly made explicit in a definition of Basic Income that does not subject it or reduce it to the segregationist limitations of

geopolitics. Not only it must be clear that the legitimacy of social contracts depends on they respecting that natural right derived from the ownership of the common good, but also the definition of that right as a duty of states cannot ever be conditional to the preconceptions of nationality or territoriality.

No political community on the planet, no society or Stat that has economic hegemony or violence monopoly over one or more territories has the right to exclude a single human being or people out of participating in nature and its resources to the exact measure of their vital needs.

Those who control natural resources and common goods, be in a private or statist fashion have, therefore, a responsibility that is not only social, but primarily humanitarian, of either never blocking the direct access to and the enjoyment of vital means to life, or to provide an equivalent compensation to that need. That is not charity but a duty of peace, given that every being has the natural right to fight by any means necessary for access to and preservation of the environmental means necessary for their survival in a state of liberty.

It is not, therefore, the Basic Income that must subject itself to the old Nation-States and their discriminatory and segregationist borders. But the new lawful States and cosmopolitan nations that must respect and guarantee the natural and common rights and goods to the peoples and nations that are to peacefully coexist in a world that is ever more realizing it is one.

The Universal Basic Income cannot be confused with the conception of a national, global or world-wide Basic Income. On the contrary, it must be a network composed of many interconnected communities, overlapping over the same territories; the same kind of open-society network that prevents any totalitarian project from prevailing over liberty through the equal distribution of resources and forces. Regardless whether that network is distributed over a village, a nation or over the entire Earth, it must not only cover the entirety of some territory, but by permanent definition, transcend it factually and conceptually, growing organically as a networked humanity.

A Basic Income must not be bounded nor subjected to the preconceptual limits of the system that pays for it or it will never reach all of humanity, neither in theory nor in practice. That is not because we are locked into the physical, legal and conceptual states that we should not build free and sustainable systems that transcend their borders. Our limits should not be preconceptual, but instead always the limits of our current capacity to realize our human vocation and potential in their fullness. Therefore, such practical limits of Basic Income cannot be derived from any kind of exclusionary definition, but instead from contingencies, limits that are not established by definitions and whose overcoming is anticipated by the definition itself and its realization plan.

Therefore, the definition must serve as a map for those who are going to act it out and make it happen, both in the sense of pointing out what are the fundamental features that the act needs, its pillars, but also what is its sky, its ceiling. That is, it

must tell what are the principles that are to never be missing, and what are the constants that effectively pay for a Basic Income, even if it is an imperfect one. So, considering that the Basic Income is the act that seeks to guarantee an equal liberty without any kind of discrimination, its fundamental pillar is the unconditionality and its sky is the universality, being guaranteed exactly by the understanding that the constant respect to the unconditionality as a principle is the universality, which is an objective that constantly shows the way for an unfolding over time.

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Obviously, even if those crucial factors are not respected, the value of any action is never cancelled out, since all actions are always greater than any thesis or paper project. But that is precisely the point: the meaning of theory is not to classify or to grade, but to be the constant guide for the formulation of practices.

## Contingencies

What should be the frequency of Basic Income payments: weekly, monthly or annually? What is the ideal amount of a Basic Income? How do we compute that? For how long should it be paid? All these questions are very important and they must be answered in order for a Basic Income to be actually implemented anywhere. But the question then is: who gets to answer them?

Those factors also belong to a definition of Basic Income, but not as an autocratic predefinition of third parties, but as the object of free and mutual agreement between the participants

of that social contract. That is, only between the ones responsible for it and the beneficiaries of it, be them the same people or not.

Nobody can be forced to spend their private resources (time or money) in a Basic Income system, be it paying for it, receiving it or making decisions about how it should work. And even if what a person is owed is a share of their common good dividends, that person cannot be forced to receive it. However, that manifest refusal or lack of interest in participating either economically or politically of decisions regarding their rights does not signify a permanent abdication. Any such renunciation to one's inalienable share of the commons is void. In the same vein, any appropriation of that share by others is unwarranted. Manifest or not, the political and economical rights of participation in the common good forever stand.

By the same principle of inviolability of property and liberty, any given person's rightful share to the common heritage cannot be appropriated or expropriated from them, regardless of whether that person does not manifest any interest in that share, is incapable of doing so, or explicitly attempts to renounce them. The political and economical participation of that person in the common good is inalienable and continues to belong only to them. Regardless of whether that person is a child, a handicapped person or an alienated adult, their economical rights must always be preserved and made available to them. Just as the space for the exercising of their political rights is always open for anyone who is willing to take them and exercise them.

Therefore, everyone has the right to a Basic Income, but adult, capable and emancipated persons also have the right to decide, in mutual agreement, the parameters such as how they will receive it and how they will pay for it, both voluntarily with respect to their private properties, and mandatorily with respect to what is owed equally to each one of them as a shared dividend.

## Conditions and Unconditionalities

Observing the possibilities that delimit the realization of necessities is a fundamental step out of utopia, but the incorporation of those contingential limitations into the definition not only make the Basic Income ideal an eternal promise of paradise, but immediately destroy the liberation act.

If a person or a community does not participate in defining the fundamental terms of their Basic Income for any reason, that does not take away from them the right to equal political and economical participation.

To put it simply, political emancipation is part of the definition as much as universality is. If A decides how the Basic Income should work and B doesn't, that cannot be part of the definition but, on the contrary, once more that definition must remain open in order to guarantee that B can participate in those democratic decisions that define the concreteness of his Basic Income at any time, as soon as he manifests their desire and capacity to do so.

Nobody who wants to achieve something must wait for those who don't want to do anything before they take their first step. That person that voluntarily takes the social and humanitarian responsibility must obviously define the terms of that Basic Income using their own capacities of conception and implementation, but they cannot ever turn these terms into a predefinition that restricts the right of decision-making and of definition of others.

Those who define a Basic Income, be conceptually or in practice, simply cannot produce an authoritarian and autocratic Basic Income conception. They cannot use it to negate the libertarian and democratic character of the Basic Income ideal. On the contrary, they must include that openness in their definition itself in order to in fact achieve a valid one that abides by the Basic Income ideal.

Free enterprise and free association are fundamental principles for the implementation of any new reality. However, those who voluntarily spearhead these processes have no reason to stop others from taking control of their own political and economical rights at any time to democratically start to decide the terms of their own Basic Incomes.

To turn what could be at any time the object of communal self-conception into an autocratic predefinition is not only unnecessary, but pernicious. That is not the creation of a Basic Income theory as a compass to guide the emancipation of those who wish for universality, but to develop theoretical instruments of domination by those who may have power and control over those predefinitions, and thus to close the doors

to not only liberation, but to the universalization of Basic Income as both a practice and as liberating knowledge.

Ockham's razor must therefore be thoroughly sharpened in order to realize the Basic Income. Is that definition necessary to implement payments? No? Then take it out. Is there a simpler way to do it? Then that simpler way is the way to go.

Any conditions, especially tacit, implicit ones, smuggled into the definition is fatal to the realization of Basic Income. That is because conditions not only create power relations, but they also reinforce the authorities that want to deny rights to the excluded as well as the political and economical privileges of those who control the systems and the knowledge. So, it is not enough to proclaim it as democratically open to all, but to keep the instruments needed for that truly democratic self-management as an object of definition and of decision of the participants themselves.

A Basic Income demands an equality of fundamental liberties and, therefore, an equality of authority over the shared properties that derive these liberties as an enjoyment of them. Thus, it also demands the end of inequalities that originate and support all the facets of deprivation. The existence of those is therefore not admissible as a conceptual predefinition, but on the contrary must be determined as an obstacle to be extinguished by the achievement of what is possible through the projection of that ideal.

In practice, an authority that defines or controls a Basic Income is useful wherever nobody is willing or capable to implement it,

but is no longer so where people are capable to do it on their own. A definition that is useful at all times is, therefore, that practical-theoretical definition that encompasses free enterprises and requires them to provision for a full political and economical emancipation through the transference of all autocratically-defined terms to the community of equals.

Indeed, any intellectual or political authority that aims to provide a Basic Income without understanding that the guarantees of factual fundamental freedoms will generate political and cultural emancipation and thus the extinction of their prerogatives, regardless of whether they intend it to or not, in fact does not understand what the Basic Income is and how human development flourishes naturally wherever there is no famine and deprivation. Either that, or they don't truly want to guarantee a Basic Income.

## **Practices and Experiences**

A Basic Income experiment is valid as a learning tool, but especially to the people who lack that knowledge as a form of emancipation. An experience of Basic Income must not only be placed within humanitarian precepts of respect to people's dignity as equals, but should also be seen as a pedagogical experience where the objective is still the same of emancipating the person that was previously deprived from that right but now enjoys it and asserts their existence through it. That is, people who receive a Basic Income cannot ever be mere guinea pigs of an economic policy but instead subjects of learning. They must participate in that knowledge and appropriate it.

As for the running time of the experiment, that is another factor that answers to the principle of consensuality and that therefore stems from an agreement between the parties about the available private resources. As for the common good, there is no room for any restrictions, as the right to a Basic Income does not cease nor is it rejectable. Therefore, if the experiment ends, that right must be urgently restored as soon as possible and then permanently maintained.

That doesn't mean that a Basic Income that is not truly guaranteed, such as within a limited experiment, is not a real Basic Income. All that is really required is that the experiment rest upon an awareness of and an honest foundation of respect towards the realization of the ideal. A Basic Income experiment may last for as long as is agreed upon by all parties involved, but its ultimate objective is nothing short of instituting Basic Income permanently.

It is obvious that, even in private agreements, the actual payments of a Basic Income must have the necessary regularity and be mutually guaranteed to not be spurious or isolated events. An experiment may fail and be interrupted before it can show a sustainable model, but if it is not designed to last for an unspecified amount of time, even if that time is just as long as possible, it will amount only to an experiment and not to a model of applied Basic Income.

It is important to understand that before it is an experiment or even a model, the Basic Income must be, above all, an attitude.

The realization of Basic Income, in fact, requires nothing more than a single person capable of recognizing in the other their equal right to life and liberty. It does not need more than the humane relationship between two people of giving and receiving without ever expecting anything in return. Nothing but the consummation of their human equality.

All the systematizing of the Basic Income for communities, nations and planets unfolds from that atom, and it must multiply without ever breaking it. It is the act that is confirmed in the attitude. It is an ethical foundation. It follows the same civilizational, or better, humanizing impulse that drives a being to not violate another. It is not a favour but a statement, embodied in act, of what kind of human being we are and to what kind of humanity we want to belong, regardless of whether we live surrounded or not by unintelligence and a lack of solidarity.

Thus, even if there were no shared property, the communion of Basic Income could still be formed without any other reason other than the consideration that a person has for every other person as an absolute equal in humanity. It does not matter their origin, their means or authority: for a valid initiative of Basic Income payment to happen all that is required is the recognition by a single person of their social and humanitarian responsibility to the right to life of another. That latter, other person does not need to be a complete stranger to the former, but that Basic Income has to be just the acknowledgement of that human equality in the other.

Basic Income is always a communion between equals even when they are unequal in means and personal circumstances. And the sums paid and received by every member of that community is defined only by them, through an agreement based on what each person can pay and what all others consider as minimally dignifying and relevant to receive.

Even if only one person contributes or just one person receives it, or even if there is no commitment to reciprocity in the future from those cannot contribute anything today, the Basic Income can be verified as a proper one while the act persists: that of a human being voluntarily guaranteeing to as many others as he can their right to life in liberty without expecting or asking for anything in return from them.

The Basic Income is an affirmation of our identity and human rights, of our inherent and inalienable equality and liberty through the only possible way to carry that out in fact and in the fullness of its meaning: through solidary relation with the other. Not through an intellectual and abstract relation, but in a sensible one that is full of meaning, one that can only be verified through the concreteness of the act.

Basic Income is not a "let's hope that we will all be free some day." It is the hand that rises up and extends itself for humanity where it exists not as an abstraction, but as a phenomenon of flesh, blood and suffering, in the famine and deprivation of another human being that is in its reach. The rest is hypocrisy.

## Sums

So, Basic Income is not a system or a governmental program, but above all an humanitarian commitment of human beings towards the real humanity of the other. It is therefore instituted in accordance with that person-to-person fundamental principle between equal and free people, and grows towards the living, solidary and intelligent network of free will's infinite potential.

It is an humanist principle that does not derive from nor submits itself to ideological abstractions. It is the affirmation, through action, of one's freedom, equality and humanity in the only way they can in fact exist as complex and integrated phenomena: through the free exercise of a peaceful communion with the other. Not merely the affirmation in act of our respect to the life and liberty that goes beyond not murdering, not enslaving or not exclusively taking from others what belongs to them, but the negation of the absurd: refusing to live with the death of other people by the absurd cause of these people not having the means to survive.

Basic Income is a payment that does not follow the Golden Rule of doing to others only that which we would like them to do to us. Instead, it is the rule of doing for others what they need done, not based on what you want or what you suppose is necessary, but based on what they scream about their needs, even when they cannot utter a single word.

And what if what you have available to give is not sufficient, or is not what they want? If you can't reach them, then reach for another. There is always someone that needs what you have to

give, as little as that may be. There is no sensitive hand whose offer has no matching demand, and there is no contribution that is not significant to those in greatest need. And the latter, above all, is what makes Basic Income an urgent matter... as it has already been for centuries.

Theorists are still very worried about sums. But more important than how much to pay is to immediately start paying what is owed to all and especially to those in most need, using whatever resources are at hand, so that massive debt may start being permanently extinguished. Besides, the magnitude of the famine and of deprivation is of no importance to the theorization of necessary sums, as these sums are to be determined by those who are going to receive it and those who are willing to pay for it. Above all, it is those who are in need that know how every cent can make a difference.

Moreover, it is irrelevant if technocrats, bureaucrats, politicians and intellectuals consider that any given sum is insufficient to establish a Basic Income. The common good does not belong to them, so it is not their prerogative to decide whether a Basic Income will be paid or not. In fact, that definition belongs to no one, as the payment of these dividends is not a debatable matter: it is a debt and it must be paid through whatever means are available. In the same vein, they are not to define what sums of private contributions are to be significant, as that is to be defined by those who are going to pay and receive a Basic Income. Unless they want to democratically negotiate the amounts they desire to contribute and what kind of Basic Income they think is fair or doable.

In other words, it is not the ethics of the humanitarian action that must be subjected to theorizations or value judgments, but it is theorizations that must observe the foundations of acts and of human and social practices if they want to attain a minimum of veracity and legitimacy.

And that is why governments that reject the Basic Income by claiming they have not enough resources are simply confessing their crime against humanity. They are lying, and even if they were not lying and they in fact did not have enough means to pay not even the minimum necessary for every human being as a shareholder of the common good, they should be receiving at the very least a single cent from these resources. In fact, they don't even have to claim or confess to anything, as the deprivation from the essential minimum and the famine of a single human being before a State that has a budget of a single cent already is proof of that crime of theft and genocide.

When States and their private corporations in fact consume all the natural resources and destroy all the common goods, it will be the criminal bankruptcy of these institutions that shall be declared and not the final consummation of ultimate deprivation and expropriation of people's rights to natural property and to fundamental freedoms.

## **Properties**

Therefore, a Basic Income system cannot be based on compulsory contributions. A Basic Income is not any sort of compensation for ownership of private properties because, in principle, those who own private property have no obligation

to compensate anyone. That is because mere possession of private or even collective property does not necessarily deprive others from what also naturally belongs to them due to their vital necessities. Only property (private or collective) that deprives others from conditions necessary for their peaceful subsistence directly from nature demands that mandatory financial compensation that, in capitalist systems, translates to monetary payments.

Peaceful property of the common good is not defined as a possession of the whole by all, or as a possession of nothing by nobody, and especially not as the appropriation of first-comers or by those who are strong enough to take it by force from others. It is not a resource that belongs to nobody in particular, or to all in general, but of all who need it and of anyone that, in private, appropriates a part of it in peace, that is, against violence, including the violence of depriving someone from their rightful private and peaceful possession as an enjoyment proportional to the person's vital needs.

Therefore, private possession does not need to even be socially or economically productive. All it needs to be, in a social state of peace that offers real guarantees of rights, is peaceful. Similarly to how possession is, above all, a duty to preserve that good and its shared enjoyment proportional to individual's necessities, in accordance with agreements of peace and available surpluses.

When already translated to the logic of capital, private property cannot violate the enjoyment of shared property. And the exercise of shared possession cannot result in the

destruction of that heritage that is the source of all possession. Shared possession acts only as an enjoyment, to the extent that the property never belongs to an individual, a class, a species, a gender or even to specific generations, but instead is a permanent natural heritage of all living beings, be them human or not.

Thus Basic Income, within the universe of State laws and of capital markets, is not really a compensation of those who own what should be public. By way of justice, it is the opposite: the private profits and revenues from the common goods are the result of the distribution of surpluses to the public and private administrators of the common goods. That distribution is made by the owners of the territory, that is, the citizens themselves, after they get paid their own social dividends. And what each citizen does with their private properties is nobody's business but theirs, as long as they remain peaceful towards all others.

However, it does not matter whether the capital that controls a natural resource is international, national or of the State itself, or even of a future free society. The controllers of whatever capital remain in obligation to pay dividends to all other persons that live in that world and that have the same rights as they have to coexist and to participate in it.

That politico-economical possession is not, therefore, neither alienable nor absolute, but instead determined by its preservation of that capital and its revenues to all. Any social contract that institutes a renunciation to that possession and to dividends generated by it is void. Not only because it is a contract of deprivation of liberties, but of possessions that

should not exclusively belong to a single people or generation for them to liquidate or destroy these possessions. These possessions can only be established legally for preservation and enjoyment, as it will always belong to the generations that are to come.

The world belongs to life itself. It belongs to those who are to be born and not to those who are afraid to die. Nobody has the right to enclose an universe for their own isolated existence.

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## **Consensualities**

A Basic Income is always an act of consensual communion. It doesn't matter that it may never reach the ideal, that is, a situation where all receive equally and contribute justly to a single Basic Income system. What is important is the consensus between those who pay and receive it and the constant freedom to separate and to formulate a competing society in terms that meet the expectations of their participants.

A Basic Income that is made alternatively or supplementarily with private resources cannot ever be instituted against the will of the participants. The main Basic Income however, that is, the one that is owed as dividends generated by the common good and that are to be shared by all, cannot be denied to anyone, not by any society or state of peace, unless that society or state wants to witness the excluded, wielding legitimacy, renounce that social contract and start a struggle for their natural subsistence against the deprivations and violations of their natural rights.

It is, therefore, an humanitarian obligation that exists prior to and that will outlast the Nation-States. It is a voluntary responsibility of societies of peace, not as a morality principle, but as a justice and security guarantee not of a repressive State, but of a State of certainty that no one will need to use their brute force to survive. And that if someone does use force then that is violence and not an exercise in legitimate defense. Societies or States that are truly peaceful do not establish themselves by prerogative or by a violence monopoly, but by mutual protection against violence and primitive deprivations. Legitimate property is established by a social contract of peace. It is established between free and equal people as a reciprocal recognition of particular and shared interests. Nobody can steal or hold the private property of others, or the shared property of all, through coercion and violence.

State and private monopolies that do not recognize or fulfill their obligation to pay a Basic Income are therefore not being merely negligent but criminal. Not only they are stealing from those they expropriate, but breaking the social contract of peace as they tacitly declare war against the rest of humanity whom they deprive of their vital minimum.

To demand that they pay the Basic Income or compensate for what is owed not only to us, but to all human beings, is part of our civic and humanitarian obligation. However, paying or working to establish or support alternative or supplementary systems, pilot projects or experiments, isn't.

These solidary or mutualist initiatives are not anybody's obligation, but even then they are not charitable actions. To

pay a Basic Income where it is mostly needed or where it is not enough will never be compulsory, but it will be what distinguishes societies capable of coexisting in peace from others.

And the world will always depend on these societies in moments of famine, of great economic and humanitarian crisis, in order for us to not degenerate in generalized conflict for survival and resources, and for us to never be forever stuck to centralizing States that sustain themselves mainly by violent coercion of peoples, classes and individuals that are marginalized to death.

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## Conclusion

If we think that we have Basic Income sufficiently idealized and defined, and that all that's left is to put it into practice and wait for rulers and societies to accept that utopia as realistic, then we definitely need to think harder not only about the real Basic Income but also about what is that reality that we are seeing or that we want.

The Basic Income is an equal sum of money paid consensually and unconditionally by those who in fact control the common good as capital to all people without any distinctions (including those of nationality or territoriality) and within the reach of financial and monetary systems. That payment is both an owed share of the human and natural heritage and a guarantee of everyone's right to a life of peace and to equality of authority and of factual, fundamental liberties.

We may even disagree on what are the properties shared by all and what are the basic incomes that provide that real liberty. That must be determined by agreements of peace and justice between people. What no intellectually honest person can disagree with, however, is that people in possession of any kind of property or any amount of income are not actually free if they are subject to relations of power and of authority inequality that they have not consented to but are forced to surrender to exactly because they lack sufficient control over these possessions and incomes in order to break free from domination and violation.

Massive possessions and incomes may turn servitude to a State into a comfortable affair, or even a pleasurable one to some. But that is still servitude, where the person does not have full control over their private property nor an equal share of control over shared property. It does not matter how rich one is, as the absence of full political and economical freedom turns the individual into a serf or vassal of those who in fact control the vital, environmental means of survival.

Thus, Basic Income is not really a mechanism or process of wealth redistribution, but of equal distribution of fundamental powers and liberties. That distribution is the foundation of states of justice and peace, as it guarantees equal human and natural rights to all, standing against all forms of depriving, violent monopolies.

In current times the Basic Income is, above all, the social dividend owed by States, companies and societies that control natural resources, to all peoples and individuals who live in

territories where they operate by imposing their capital as political-economic systems.

The Basic Income can also be a payment carried out by alternative, competing and supplemental systems of mutual social protection. It is then a system established by a voluntary social contract agreed upon by a group that aims to cover for their costs of living and is funded by voluntary contributions.

Finally, we can say that these two systems of funding could assemble into a ideal Basic Income payment network that is funded by the sum of revenues from shared properties and from private contributions. Moreover, that network would not need the infrastructure of monopolizing, centralizing States as both components of that ideal Basic Income (the main, inalienable one and the voluntary, supplemental one) could be managed by free, competing societies. But that is almost an entire other story.

## **Closing remarks**

There are, therefore, distinctions to be drawn between Basic Income conceptions based on their origins and their concerns. One conception hails from the central, rich countries, that does not escape, nor wants to escape, from their Nation-States that support them, no matter the cost to the well-being of the rest of the world. Another comes from the marginalized countries, peoples and classes inside and outside of the territories dominated politically or economically by these States.

The former is for an "everyone" limited to its national citizens or at most to those living legally within its geopolitical borders. The latter, which is universal, does not limit itself to any nationalistic or territorial component. Instead, it limits itself only to its own technological and financial capacity to expand the reach of its social and humanitarian system.

In the former, the ideal of universality is delimited by citizenship and other such State-political concepts. In the latter, the universal is an open ideal that expands according to possibilities democratically defined by emancipated peoples and individuals as dignitaries of their own rights and duties.

There is not, therefore, a single theoretical and practical distinction as we supposed, but completely different conceptions of an Universal Basic Income. Conceptions so separated as the ideas of universality and humanity are by ideas about race, origin, classes, genders and even species.

Universality today is, in practice, a concept turned so empty as that of human rights. It is in danger of once more being buried alive by nationalistic, patriotic and xenophobic preconceptions that once more rise against the humanist and cosmopolitan side-effects of globalization itself.

Universality, liberty and equality are not utopic ideals for consumption by the realpolitik's pragmatism. They are utopias for new worlds and revolutionary social policies. They are practices so marginal and subversive as the peoples and individuals that need them and that put them in practice by necessity and solidarity.

Liberation from relations of power and submission. An equality of authority over the common goods. Universal rights to freedom of labor. All these in practice are ideals of universal rights to life and liberty that were denied to the marginalized peoples and individuals of the world. And are, therefore, not ideas that cannot be realized in practice, but ideas that are always damned, always inconvenient as is the resistance of those who do not want to be an object owned by someone else.

Many other forms of poverty are sadder and more urgent than that of intellectual poverty, but there is no poverty so destructive as that of ideals reduced to preconceptions. Today, few ideas are so impoverished and reduced as those of universality, equality and liberty. Liberty as purchasing power. Equality as political citizenship. Universality as totalitarian globalization.

There is, therefore, not only a difference of theses and practice in Basic Income, but of definition between the old one and the new ones. Between the nationalistic ones and the cosmopolitan ones or, more precisely, between the Basic Incomes that need an inequality of authority in order for rulers to grant them to their civilized, patient and obedient citizens, and the Basic Incomes that demand that the unequal in fundamental liberties rise up against the deprivations and violences inflicted upon their lives and their dignity.

What is the Basic Income without that struggle against the famine and deprivation of liberties? What is the Basic Income if not the struggle for these rights?

The Basic Income is nothing or, more precisely, means nothing to those who badly need those liberties if it is not a guarantee that no human ever will, under no circumstances, be deprived from what they need to survive in freedom. The guarantee that not only no person can ever be born without the resources they need to survive, but that never in their lifetimes they will be forced to be a servant or else die by the lack of those resources.

When we show what Basic Income is or was supposed to be, without being reduced to a mere governmental or assistance program, it reveals itself as an humanitarian principle so evident and undeniable that it becomes almost impossible for one to openly oppose it without reverting to and exposing criminal pro-slavery and eugenic prejudices. That is why, proto-fascists aside, objections to the Basic Income are of the polite variety: "That's a beautiful, but impossible ideal, as there are not enough resources."

At least that was the case up to 2008, when trillions of dollars started being continuously injected into States and the banking systems to save them. And people finally caught up to how their governments spend their resources with subsidies to financial markets, environmentally-destructive multinational corporations, weaponry, wars, and all of the corruption that lubricates these monstrous machines.

Today it is beyond clear that there is not a lack of resources but a surplus. They are however monopolized and being applied to ends diametrically opposed to human rights and social interests. That should be enough to checkmate the scoundrels of the world. But we cannot be naive, as in that power chess the players never tip their kings. Instead, they set fire to the circus and slap the board before the game ends. It may seem that time is not on the side of those whose kings are in check. But no, time runs out for us who consider ourselves humanists and libertarians.

Long gone are the comfortable times when humanist libertarians could defend merely negative freedoms and human rights without ever getting their hands dirty. Times when it was accepted that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a work-in-progress, that "civilization" would eventually reach those deprived from it.

The comfortable lie has been dispelled. The presidents of our States and companies were caught reveling in the resources that others lacked and that did not even belong to them in the first place. For those who still prefer to flatter the powerful in hopes of one day belonging to their little club, present times make that extremely difficult to do without revealing one's wagging tail. How to accept their arguments that there are not enough resources, when we now know that their own accounts clearly have them, and frequently that fact is not even hidden?

Our parents and grandparents had the excuse of a lack of information to justify their alienation. But what is our excuse?

In short, how are we to continue playing their little games, answering their questionnaires and objections, when what is lacking to the children dying of hunger in Africa is exactly those existing and stolen resources that later return as land mines or the pollution of their rivers?

I'm sorry to say, but if you don't live in the world's centers then you will have either dig yourself out of your own hole or wait until you're promoted to guinea pig. Asking for help from those who dug the hole in the first place and benefit from your despair, exceptions that confirm the rule aside, is pointless. The true Basic Income is libertarian in the most profound sense. It is a political, economic and cultural emancipation. It is something achieved by equals in their shared suffering and solidarity, and not the grace or benefaction of any authority.

It does not matter that what we can do is little. As said before, there is always a smaller fish. There is always someone poorer, blacker or more fucked than us, and we can make a difference to them.

The perfectly possible and perhaps necessary way to a truly liberating, Universal Basic Income is through the establishment of an open, free, borderless community network that spreads across the world in as many concurrent ways as are the ways people are deprived and starved. That international network of solidarity is limited only by the financial capacities of its volunteer participants and by nothing else.

Tiny projects and communities, and even the most simple and modest social action carried out by an individual, when done

from person to person, without intermediation, are universal! They must, if they want to escape the authoritarian framework of preconceptions and economic and geopolitical interests. It is not the size of corporations and their machineries that determines universality's progress towards reaching the whole of a mankind without prejudices or borders, but the scope of our humanitarian ideals and principles.

It rests upon us, those who have the least capital and the most solidarity, the responsibility for the future of peoples and of humanity. Because the size of one's will to change the world is inversely proportional to one's privileges.

It is up to us to at least try to transform small actions and projects in the sparks of a network of free and interconnected communities. It is up to us, those who have the least available to pay for a basic income, to realize that we can and should pay it to those who need it the most. That is, if we truly want to see a truly unconditional Basic Income arrive for all someday.

The Basic Income stems from natural properties that can be appropriated either individually or collectively as long as that appropriation does not destroy them or deprive others from enjoying them. Wealth is built through a dispute for surpluses. Political and economical power is built through the monopolistic and destructive imposition of poverty. Of the common good's tree we can only harvest its fruit, and we should do so while ensuring no one is left without their share. If these fruits were infinite in number, then wealth inequality could also be infinite as long as there was no famine left. However, where wealth built from the destruction of the trees

and the theft of other's shares of fruit, there is no infinite harvest that is going to stop man from destroying himself.

It is from that right that belongs to everyone that the Basic Income we all have comes from. It is a right to enjoy the tree of life, and a duty to conserve the tree and its fruit.

We, and especially the activists that walk across the many worlds, have the humanitarian responsibility to unite and cooperate so that the Basic Income becomes more than a thesis on universality, so that it in fact can reach all the forgotten peoples, individuals and places that were condemned to cold, sanitized and silent genocide. Because we know that civilization and progress always comes, but with a cost in blood. And we know who are the people who always end up spilling that blood of theirs; who are the usual targets of that genocide.

More than ever we need an applied, urgent Basic Income that is truly for all. But, my friend, do not sit and wait for it. Rise up and start walking, because it is exactly from the places where it is needed the most that the true Basic Income will be born. How could it be otherwise? It had to come from the eyes and hands of those who see the other as nothing short of their own brother.

Suffering is knowledge. And true knowledge humanizes and spawns bonds of brotherhood that reach far beyond the fences, flags and titles of the men of possessions, powers and their sciences.

It will be a long way to go, but changes shall come. For they, must.

Who believes in universal basic income, please take that step forward.

