

Guaranteed Living Income Toronto Newsbreeze February 19, 2017.

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The **ATTAC** people and the “labor intermediation” activists have discovered Basic Income.

The idea of Basic Income

What are the social and economic implications? How can it be funded?
What is the international status on experiments with Basic Income?

Friday Feb 24th, 7 pm - 9 pm
519 Community Centre, Room 214,
519 Church Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 2C9

Learn all about this group <http://attac-ontario.org/group519/>

Contact: dix@attac-ontario.org

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Other meetups coming up.

The next **HSAG** meeting is Thursday, February 23 at 1:30, at Riverdale Community Health Services 955 Queen st. East.

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The next **Basic Income Toronto Organization** meeting is due Tuesday, February 21, 7 PM at Metro hall. No word received about whether it is going ahead. If you are interested in attending, contact sasha.mcnicoll@gmail.com or dynamic@nocturnalcommissions.com

You also might suggest that if people are unwilling to get on with the jobs they have undertaken, they need to turn it over to those who are.

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The first Guaranteed Living Income activists salon is now tentatively booked for March 4. It will be at the Ralph Thornton Centre, third floor back room, 2 to 4 pm. For more info contact racoon@bell.net More information closer to the date.

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Yanos Varoufakis is an Economics Professor. He was briefly the Finance minister of Greece and stood up to the vultures of the Euro Bank until the Greek prime minister caved in. Now he is a strong advocate for reorganizing the European Union.

He has also given **the best video argument for a BI yet seen.**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvgdtF3y0Ss&feature=youtu.be>

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About Bill 6.

Fix the Gap Hamilton would like you to call your MPP and get him to support bill 6.

<http://fixthegap.hamiltonpoverty.ca/about/>

<http://fixthegap.hamiltonpoverty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Fix-The-Gap-Strategy-Kit-Bill-6-October-11.pages.pdf>

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An intersection between Basic Income, the precariate, work stress, Exit and Voice

I have the idea here of trying to show ways of integrating discussion of Income Guarantee into public discussions. I often attend these “five good

ideas" get-togethers held by Maytree foundation. This one, February 13, was "five good ideas about Decreasing Workplace Stress". The presenter was Doctor Kwame MacKenzie, a psychiatrist and expert on stress, and head of Wellesley institute.

Much of dealing with stress, according to Dr. MacKenzie, is having some power over outcomes. This involves a "coherent" work environment where everyone understands what is going on and has influence. It was an interesting talk but he did not get much into an aspect which interests me; what would the effect of a Basic Income be on workplace stress.

This was in the context of a paper I just read, coming from Jurgen De Wispelaere; Basic Income in the Capitalist Economy: The Mirage of "Exit" from Employment. The thesis was that a BI as commonly conceived by the orthodox BI movement would not give employees much real power in the workplace. They cannot really use the threat to quit and live on BI as a way of having some voice.

The gist of it is, if someone leaves a job he still may not find another job immediately or at all. The employer may not care if he goes, as he can find a replacement almost immediately. Or, of course, he can simply automate the job. Or not, because despite all the excitement about job loss by automation, many jobs still cannot be automated.

De Wispelaere and his collaborator Simon Birnbaum have an idea about high and low value employees which confuses me. "Low value" would mean low skilled, capable to be discarded easily. In other words, the "precariate". "High value" would mean the technocratic elite who will thrive in the "post industrial" world; who would have autonomy over their employment and a low stress level. They can easily move from job to job and usually will not care about whether a Basic Income gives them "exit" or voice".

BI is for the low value people who will however be the majority in future; the techno-peasants. The technological elite will be a minority. It is the low values who need voice and exit in the workplace, but are these useful?

It is unfortunate that the best part of Dr. MacKenzie's talk is not in the video. The part about the "Whitehall Study" starts around minute 29. That is where it was discovered that the people with the least control over their jobs have the most mental illness and heart attacks. Usually that is the lower paid people, the ones "closest to the door", but sometimes more highly paid people lack control.

Yet even these highly paid but highly stressed people would be highly paid because they have something of value which employers will pay well for. They can move on before the stress gets to be too much. It is the low value people who get the stress and need the Exit if not the Voice provided by a BI.

Then it got to question and answer time with Dr. Kwame, Someone asked a question which set up mine. What can the lowest status people, the doormen and cleaners, do about stress due to lack of control? His advice was to change the scene every few years, do not get into a big rut at one very low control, repetitive job.

So I asked him what effect a Basic income could have on work place stress. I thought he might not be prepared for it but he knew exactly what a BI was and had a pretty good answer. It would be irrelevant to people with stellar careers, but for people in highly routine jobs, it would make it easier for them to move on every few years, before total stagnation sets in.

This does not say much for "collective bargaining" for low skill, low control, private sector occupations. But people should never try to make a career out of them anyway. Plus, unionization of those kinds of jobs are largely history, anyway. Unions are becoming mainly for government service and non profit sector employees. Basic Income will be a boon to people in low control jobs, enabling them to move on frequently, and take time off between these jobs.

Thus, a Basic Income will not be much use as a "strike fund". It will not help private sector unions much at all. The upshot is, it might be better to stop using that argument for a BI. But should BI advocates give up altogether on asking for support from unions?

If you think of labor unions now as something mainly to do with the public and non profit sector, there is still plenty of common cause. A BI would be of limited help to such people in exerting Voice with the employer. But it could help in increasing and securing jobs in these sectors by moving more of the economy away from the private sector.

But this now leads into a whole new topic; how a “post industrial” economy will actually work in regards to how the remaining work is distributed. That remains very speculative. For now I can say that a halfway decent, more than just Basic, Income would empower The Precariate to Exit when they need to, and De Wispelaere should stop worrying about that part of it at least.

An important aim of a movement for an income guarantee is to have more people with a deep understanding of BI/GLI within the context of the present century, able to go to public discussions of this kind and influence them in the direction of present century solutions. Also, to learn from the best minds available on topics bearing on it.

Dr. Kwame’s excellent lecture is at;
<https://maytree.com/five-good-ideas/stress-management-resiliency/>

Jurgen De Wispelaere’s opus is found among his other excellent work at;
https://www.academia.edu/27890737/Basic_Income_in_the_Capitalist_Economy_The_Mirage_of_Exit_from_Employment

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Next GLI News Breeze is February 26th.