

## **Introducing the concept of “basic income” into the economy of South Africa linked to confronting the problem of AIDS**

There can be no doubt about the “corporate globalisation” playing a key role in the democratisation and the achievement of independence in South Africa. On the other hand it is exactly this “corporate globalisation”, which accelerates the generation of inequality, mass unemployment and crime rates, which is endangering the democracy.

The trans-national “investor” – once lauded and hoped for as a “shining white knight (saviour, blessing etc.) – suddenly mutates into the dreaded nightmare as soon as its repressive techniques of accumulation and business-making no longer meet national needs and thus force these economies to move on to “new markets”. Such an economy knows neither justice nor any social conscience whatsoever. The core essence and basic nature of trans-national capital with its neo-liberal corporate globalisation damages it with accelerated rapidity and thus the technical and social development of many nations.

The main problems for industrialising countries like South Africa are the credit grants by IMF and WTO and the privatisation agreements forced thereby. (GATS → General Agreement on Trade in Service) This led not unexpectedly to a termination of the alliance between ANC and COSATU in 2001. The COSATU did not support the politics of privatisation of the ANC who was (and still seems to be) willing to sell parts of ESCOM, Telkom, Transnet, SAA and Spoornet to “global players”. When health, education, energy, transport etc. is left to the pure “unscrupulous” market-situation there will be no identification with a community of any form.

Slowly but surely an awareness awakes to those nations guided by the ideology of stability by the IMF and the pressure of privatisation by the WTO. (see Cochabamba → Bolivia).

It's not only since Milton Friedman that we know the well-known technique of the capital of creating a work-force-army in reserve: it is and has been for a long time the guarantee for lowest possible wages.

The growing crises of accumulation and utilisation of partially fictional currency racing around the globe, particularly in the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America this spectre is increasingly becoming recognised as a tremendous danger. The illusory models of freedom and growth, developed by the Western political elite, have both become hollow and unreliable and devoid of any credibility, and their propagandists are merely to be seen (looked at) as “waiters” of the capital.

Indeed, the politician's caste seems to be compelled to assume the thankless job of providing meaning and legitimacy to the tasks and targets of trans-national capital – to which they themselves admit – to supporting the repressive and un-social tasks as both meaningful and worthy of support at the national level (and as disguised as possible). It is for this reason that these advocates constantly have to struggle for legitimacy and credibility. Elections are in the meantime looked at as nothing but expensive advertising campaigns for their own personal aggrandisement.

Despite the appearance of Military-Keynesianism, which transfers increasingly funds from the social or general budget to the budgets of police and military structures, the state warrants no security.

The state is no longer capable of guaranteeing any security whatsoever. Mafia-type and criminal sectors within the economy come into being and it thus becomes necessary to buy security. Critics such as R. Kurz in a further development of his thinking, define world capital for example in his book “Das Weltkapital” (Edition TIAMAT, Berlin 2005) (as) “warlords” – as having become the new pillars of culture.

The European Unions - despite all of their futile attempts of restraining national capital to the national boundaries of production and services – are forced to rec-

ognise that the confrontation with finance capital makes it helpless and beyond the scope of any potential for national control. The growth rate of international productivity coupled with the growth rates of the population in general and the resultant demand for energy require immediate intervention.

In a frantic attempt to develop socio-political measures at the national level to offset this chaotic and destructive future of capital new serious attempts are consequently occurring.

The entry into “basic income” is but one such – albeit timid – attempt. Nothing terrifies people more than the loss of work and social security. The efforts of COSATU in South Africa and Lula da Silva in Brazil are prime examples of such initiatives.

With even greater intensiveness the space of Europe, referred to as “Verwöhnungsraum” by Peter Sloterdijk, the catch up modernisation efforts is generating a discourse dealing with human rights and the even broader question: what do we mean by INCOME?

An extreme example of this is the monetary per-capita of Equatorial Guinea: it totals USD 50.200.- and is thus located in second place according to the CIA fact book – surpassed only by Luxemburg which has the highest income per-capita on the globe!

(see: <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ek.html#top>)

(With regard to the real distribution of income in Equatorial Guinea and the distribution and the acquisition of tactics of Teodoro Obiang Nguema with the aid of the oil companies and their ideas of “good governance” ought to be dealt with at another opportunity.)

However, the scholarly economics should be so sincere to not put Namibia at the end of a ranking list with 70.7 % on the contrary, Equatorial Guinea has an estimated GINI-index of 95 %.

The structural measures pursued by the IMF and WTO only pertain to the economic security of the investor; social security and the protection of the general public are conversely growing ever smaller and imperilled.

The privatisation of state enterprises and public property means that access to such must be purchased and is thus dependent on the financial resources of those wishing to purchase such properties.

If everything is becoming a question of income and solidarity is being abolished, then it will no longer be capable of providing any sort of identity.

The issue of human rights devoid any security whatsoever evolves into nothing more than an empty moralistic slogan.

However, due to its particular historical and political past, South Africa is particularly in need of an identity base founded in solidarity. Only such a base for identity would be in a position to participate in efforts to reduce the crime rate, which is nourished by the fatal insecurity of major parts of the population.

In Europe most discussions of “basic income” centre around in how it could be financed and about its potential impact on potential tax revenues (see the models of the boundaries of transfer, developed by Pelzer et al.)

In this context, this issue of finances is of secondary importance. There already exist numerous calculatory models demonstrating the feasibility of such an approach. Of considerably graver dimensions is the issue of the enormous intertwined bureaucracy and the concomitant social services administration which would become obsolete through the introduction of basic income.

In Europe at best, complicated taxation models would be the result thereof and for which numerous advocates already exist among Europe’s conservative politicians.

Such conservative propaganda slogans as “Malibu Surfing Syndrome” have come into existence and potentially coincide with deeply entrenched western European protestant ethics such as: “no work, no eat” which characterises the concept of basic income as immoral.

It is simply difficult to believe that capitalism could exist without the coercion to sell one's working power. On the contrary, the power of capital with all of its think-tanks, loyalist media and affirmative cultural elites would undertake nothing to prevent and undermine such socio-political attempts. Even as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> century the English author Arthur Young, who had written numerous works on the economy and economic problems and already discovered the secret: "The magic of poverty turns sand to gold!"

Or less prosaic: ..."everyone but an idiot knows that the lower classes must be kept poor, or they will never be industrious". (from: H. Ganßmann, "Geld und Arbeit", Campus Verlag 1996, page 277)

The "Alaska"-Model proves itself to be equally as unfeasible: between the real income derived from the oil resources revenue and its unequal distribution among the general population in form of such a basic income, a fund has been installed which provides both the goat and the herdsman with the responsibility of the distribution of those resources. In Alaska grave differences in the shares were the result. Only the income of the fund distribution administration remained guaranteed.

South Africa still finds itself politically in the phase of "coming of age" and therefore still has the chance to develop its own independent social model. The introduction of a model of basic income could thus become a step in the direction of such independence.

The level of individual income proposed by Claudia Haarmann amounting to a mere 100 Rand per person does not really amount to a real basic income, and yet its introduction would be tactically prudent because it would signify a step in the right direction.

Whoever believes South Africa couldn't afford a basic income should take a closer look at the economic impact of the still growing HIV infection rate throughout the country. The latest AIDS report by UNAIDS which predomi-

nantly focuses on the countries south of the Sahara provides alarming concerning data , which has been simply ignored in South Africa to this date.

On the “Human Development Index” many of the countries south of the Sahara most seriously affected by AIDS indicate a falling rate, most of them South Africa with 35 points. See corresponding websites: <http://hdr.undp.org>. and [http://unaids.org/en/HIV\\_data/2006/GlobalRate/default.asp](http://unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2006/GlobalRate/default.asp)

There is a conspicuous relationship between AIDS and poverty which must be recognised quite evident in numerous areas. It ranges from loss of income due to rising costs for health care, costs of burials, withdrawal of family members from school and educational measures in order to care for afflicted members of the family - (this pertains predominantly to women and girls) – up to child-labour. Children not only lose their parents due to aids, they also forfeit family support for their own growth, regular school attendance is jeopardised and later vocational training and sufficient future income derived there from.

Companies meanwhile have to note significant changes in their personnel structure. They have to generate additional funds to make up for losses of trained personnel. And last but not least, in many cases foreign investors shy away from external investments and shift their personnel recruiting efforts to other countries.

See also: “The BMW Group cares”

[http:// www.econsense.de/ themen\\_good\\_practice/ \\_mitarbeiter/05.html](http://www.econsense.de/themen_good_practice/mitarbeiter/05.html)

The stigmatisation suffered by HIV- or AIDS-infected persons throughout the society is one of the greatest impediments for afflicted persons, it also contributes aggravatingly to the resultant rise and spread of poverty by excluding concerned people from potential social aid and healthcare.

In view of South Africa’s predominant position of wide-spread AIDS affliction it can be worthwhile to link the possibility of basic income with the struggle to overcome this pandemic.

Permit me to present a simple proposal:

Every individual in South Africa is provided with 100 RAND per month as an initial step in the direction of basic income. Whoever voluntarily accepts to subject to AIDS testing once a year will receive an additional 50 RAND per month – independent of being affected by AIDS or not. This voluntary blood testing could then also be used for tuberculosis and diabetes which would contribute to increased acceptance of such testing and also reduce the stigmatisation connected with AIDS testing. For those tested positive special support would be ensured – it could result for instance in ongoing allocation of the additional 50 RAND. The amounts of public funds allocation would of necessity be subject to special negotiations. The dramatic development of tuberculosis-resistance also shows that prompt action must be taken. The proposed solution of “TB-detention-camps” will surely not be accepted by the community.

Since the HIV-infection has an incubation window of 3 months before the first anti-bodies become identifiable and thus capable of being detected, it would make sense to carry out the testing on a semi-annual basis. Anti-body testing is considerable less expensive than a real blood test. Such questions should ultimately be subject to expert decision-making.

Although a number of VCT (Voluntary Control and Testing) centers have been set up throughout South Africa, and despite the high rates of infection are relatively high, the willingness to undergo testing is still diminished. This means that new incentives and campaigns in the fore field in favour of testing will be necessary to increase acceptance such efforts.

In the meantime South Africa has initiated participation in international development and field testing of microbicides (chemical contraceptives to be used by women). This is urgently needed since in contrast to the relatively low infection rates among males (currently this amounts to 1 in 14) in the female population in the age group of 20-24 years of age, one in four women is infected. This means that the potential infection rates among females is three and a half times greater than among males. Since women assume the burden of child rearing and training

in addition to vocational employment, this means that the potential social and economic burden on society as a whole will be enormous (see the above).

The loss of any considerable number of women would generate tremendous costs to society.

There can be no question other than putting basic income in women's hands would contribute considerably more to social and health development than in the hands of men.

Closer study of the widespread infection-rate of tuberculosis in South Africa indicates that it often comes as a so called "opportunistic" disease due to HIV or AIDS infection and would thus "surface" during such blood testing.

While there has been a rapid development of AIDS medication, a corresponding development in the field of testing mechanisms remains limited. The U.S. American Food and Drug Administration has indeed recently issued a permit for the distribution of an oral testing medication called OraQuick Advance. See: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/news/2004/NEWO1042.html>.

The Western-Blot Test using plasma and/or urine remains a common method of testing. Yet ELISA (Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay) is also an accepted method of testing. Yet I'm not prepared now to present all of the currently available methods of testing. What remains to be dealt with is the necessity of developing a step-by-step plan at the experimental level which would be able to reconcile the necessary levels of accuracy with corresponding resultant costs.

One of the most significant facts in the treatment of HIV-infected people is the circumstance that the therapy would dramatically decrease its spread, which further compels the treatment.

Installing such a combined BASIC-INCOME would not only provide South Africa rapid means of dealing with the most of its problems but would make also an excellent contribution to the concept of real "good governance", which would give this idea a new significance and would result in general international attention.

