

Problems and prospects of population education in India's rural setting¹

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It is now a universally accepted opinion that for an ultimate solution of population problem facing utter disaster, a problem oriented population education has much to contribute as a predisposing factor. Population education is a means to an end, a means different from direct population control programme by introducing family planning methods. It is a method which makes possible to realise the objective by the gradual process of socialisation of the desire and motivational behaviour of the individual or group relating to family size norm, so that they would realise and understand the problem as their own and would take recourse to the solution on the problem also on the same spirit. It is a long-range programme goal but benefits are more permanent in character and goes over generations. India has long recognised the need of a population education programme and are putting effort to chalk out programme plans at the state level with the assistance of NCERT, under the guidelines of the seminars and conferences held recently in the country.

India is a vast country with multicultural background and multishaped population problems. As far as eighty per cent of her population live in villages whose illiteracy rate stands to the height of a minor, living condition is below the subsistence level and—with no future ahead, who are conservative in outlook, dogmatic in nature, tradition—bound with fatalistic attitude and religious superstition. All the courses of their life being spent to satisfy the stomach, still half-fed, semi-employed and unemployed, has created in them a philosophy which is apathy towards life, with no ambition for upliftment. They have no social intercourse with urban culture, outlook and way of life. It is natural to expect that, under the situation their indiscriminate reproductive behaviour cannot be governed by forces other than utter callousness and with least thought of pros and cons. To have male children and large family size means status and power, economic security for old age and symbol for ancestral rituals. They beget children unplanned and unaccounted by costs and benefits. Fertility to these people loom large and they are the main contributors to the menacing population growth.

The aim of our population education to be really fruitful and effective within a short period time, we are to look with all seriousness and as a first priority goal for this key target population, the vulnerable group, who really matters in the whole drama of popu-

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lation growth. Considering the scarce resources in the country and also considering that urban privileged classes are already in a setting to know their own well-being and conducive to responses for small family size, it is felt as an impending necessity to carry the message of population education to rural communities spread over the millions of villages, whose socialisation process is more difficult and complex under the unfavourable village socio-economic system. Of course, like all diffusion process, the process of population learning and awareness may indirectly permeate through the marginal elite to the fringe areas and gradually to the villages. But that may be a process to take its own time.

Once the problem objective is defined next issue is to build up a programme realistic, rational, simple and meaningful to the understanding of the illiterate village masses. It should be presented in a lucid and most interesting manner and artistically drawn. As the concept and method of population education in the developed countries is by far distinct than the countries now developing, so also the process of population education to the village's is obviously likely to be much different than that to the urban town dwellers or to those in the cities. It is therefore, the concept and method of population education with content material for academic curriculum as now-a-days found in the West may be suitable for urban dwellers who have facilities for an organised educational system and awareness open for cultural and educational development. Their social setting is already prepared to conceive the ideas of population education more rationally. Problems too are less acute as it is beset with the rural communities. To make a feasible programme for village communities and its implementation is no doubt a stupendous task. Let us think however for a suitable and simple resource development programme other than school curriculum by which the ideas of population education may be flowed to the ear of the millions of masses. It is a multichannel communication programme through stimulating mass-media with promising communicating agents, thought provoking content materials and information system.

Content material : As an introduction to population phenomenon it may be useful to start with a picture-sque representation of recent population explosion in developing countries and specifically in the nation. The Government is concerned over, how our development plans are being effected due to the alarming population growth, how the uninterrupted growth makes the processes of our economic growth and agricultural development programmes extremely difficult. Problem of unemployment, semistarvation and starvation, malnutrition and disease, cost of education and medical care as direct consequences of population should also be highlighted in a more lucid manner. A visual study of man and extent to which crowds make up a significant part in his social and cultural life, portrayed in roads and streets, in education and employment, in amusement and relaxation and in transportation and communication, concluding with ultimate human crowd with an unrestricted growth, and nature and magnitude of burden imposed by population pressure on every walk of life may be a useful consideration.

Population awareness programme should reflect a basic functional knowledge of population dynamics, a basic understanding of process of reproduction, health problem

with too many child bearing, advantages of a small family and disadvantages of a larger one—that former is more ideal and necessity for village development plans.

Primary factors to consider in population awareness programme is the decision regarding age at marriage family size norm and spacing, their relationship to population growth, mothers' health, rate of growth of education and employment, and the like. Considering as such, examples like relation between population growth and structure of his family and his community and its consequence on family life, that high dependency burden effects food, schooling, and medical care for young in a poor family, examples in family roles and topics which promote an understanding of social dynamics related to population process may be useful. Focussing on religious and cultural resistance to change, examples on how benefits were achieved after religious and traditional barriers were abolished in developed countries and in urban societies, citing Japan's case and explaining how breakdown of traditional family customs and adoption of abortion helped them to slow population growth and to bring economic emancipation may also be taken as good content materials. Some knowledge of the relation between population, health and society and that government's population policy influence health and general well-being of current and future generation and has got indirect effect on birth rate and greater productivity may be useful for population awareness; that many births and without spacing has direct impact on mother's health and per capita consumption; that cost-production is not economic with large family unit of many members and the like may arouse inspiration. That how population growth is an impediment to green revolution—interaction of this growth phenomenon with individual lives; that technological advances in agricultural production does require less manpower, makes better quality and greater production of food, that too many children means greater division of scarcer arable land; that mortality has been controlled and there is no need for begetting many children. Lively examples on above in slides and pictures may help understanding of population phenomenon and may draw directives from these.

Viewing population pattern in historical perspective, analysing demographic transition of countries and issues ahead, with a historical reflection of dynamics of family size norm of now developed countries before their development and how they achieved economic development and prosperous family units by making it a policy of small family norm; how the nearest urban elites are in a living condition superior to theirs due on account of reduced family size may be convincing to the villagers as the benefits of family size reduction.

Giving examples that available resource distribution present and future depends on controlled population growth; describing situation at present in the world and own country-region, highlighting that national welfare means your country's good—your family's welfare; citing facts of growth in variety of organisms; different animal responses to the same environmental limits—concluding man too, should be guided by natural laws and then indicating alternative ways by which population might be limited such as starvation, disease, and birth control practice; that one's fate and fate of the spouse and children can be moded, at least partially, by maximising access to an increasing quality

of life, in education, housing and other material amenities by using present resources of population control material which is ready at hand and can immediately be utilized at a minimum or free cost, it may be concluded by creating a sense of responsibility of each individual for aspiring a small family norm and avoiding unwanted pregnancy at the individual unit, solution of many problems may be attained which may lead to family benefit, benefit to community and to nation at large.

Population instruction system : Speech has been the principal vehicle for communicating knowledge, experience and creative thoughts since earliest days of history in educational development. Population education development programme may utilize the media with advantage through 'baithaks' with village leaders properly trained in the field and local seminars, lectures where panchayats opinion, and his organisation will reflect the importance of population awareness programme. Also other programmes sponsored by campus groups would serve to increase population awareness among children and youth for their future role as parents by examples set for them. Mass media is a potent educative force. Special documentation films, slides, and various audio-visual aids like T.V., radio may be suitable vehicles for diffusing population information and behaviour system to the rural setting. Multiple exhibits on planning for better family living using noble techniques such as coloured pictures series of wall sheets, cartoons, posters and pamphlets in public places may have a suitable place for the poor villagers. Open-air film-shows may be set up in prominent public places to deal with employment related population problem, home economics, sanitation, personal hygiene and the like. Traditional and folk oral art demonstration, puppetry, role-playing, at the same time models, travelling displays theatres, tapes, cinemas and operas may stimulate the immediacy of direct contact and be used effectively in population education programme to bring ideas to large number of rural masses young and adults, who need to make decisions on family size. Medias like songs and slogans may be regarded as additional means for infusing the ideas of population into the minds of the people deep-rooted. Sometimes family planning workers visit clients at home and discuss with them. These may have an indirect influence to the youths and children relating population awareness and creating motivation relating to future family size norm.

Fargo technique, a method of using film and videotape recording to teach people to communicate with their leaders is a new way to population awareness recently found successful in United States may be tried as a useful media. The Freire method of education in population may have a wide influence on adult education in India. Self-instructional manual may be introduced in village schools and other appropriate bodies. Prototypic materials may be treated as a course, events relating to daily life activity of villagers may be more rewarded.

Each district has a family planning bureau at block level. There are 244 rural family planning centres. Each center has a sub-centre. These centers may be utilized more effectively through romantic film shows as one of the broad-based existing channel for the programme implementation.

Communicating Agents : All categories of health personnel, particularly health educators and specialists, resource personnel as family planning leaders, community

leaders as Panchayats, demographers, manpower planners, religious, cultural and social service agencies, block development officers, organisers for worker and adult education, government welfare departments, personnel in agricultural extension service, literacy programme workers and efforts of Red Cross may be considered as useful channels for training and guiding prospective parents.

An infrastructure policy plan may be developed among these organisations and intensive training course may be implemented to develop leadership in population education.

Resource materials and information service Agencies : Instructional materials and childrens' books as well as a list of institutions concerned with population education may be obtained from UNESCO and other world information service agencies engaged in research in population education programme. Berelson has published a comprehensive annotated bibliography of basic reference material for population awareness. He introduced series of strategies on various subject areas.

UNESCO has submitted new proposals for demonstration projects for use in folk and mass media in support of population programme where modern media is not yet developed. It has laid down guidelines for their use integrated with mass media. UNICEF is preparing a mother and child oriented programme to promote awareness of population concern and intends to produce public service T.V. spots to be used in movie theatres. Number of authors may be contracted to write on population education. ILO also produces relation of population growth and employment, social welfare and related issues. Idea is to include population related theme in all aspects of regular public information programme. It has also produced a photo-story on family planning in India. A sixteen page colour brochure is in preparation featuring family health. A 10-minute motivational cartoon film on family planning will be made. IPPF supports for demonstration film at grass-root levels use of folk and mass media taking advantage of popular calypso music form. Information Dossies, Rossellini films, Alacode in Latin America are preparing films, innovative project for promoting development of new communication media for population education. N.G.O. and other co-ordinating group all over the world have joined the programme.

An educational programme system for the panchayats and personnel training for other inter-channel organisations stated earlier should immediately taken up with incentives of full time or part-time services after completion of training. Research regarding methods and means as to how effectively dissemination be made deep-rooted in the hearts of the villagers should be given a simultaneous consideration. It is essential to establish an information system with educational aids and bibliographical reference available in country and abroad for the use of the population education suitable in rural setting. Existing human resources and institutions have already started developing activities at the local level. Documentation Centres for diffusing on information by UNESCO and other international bodies is already on the way.

Following colombian plan of action and with UNESCO assistance and Ministry of Planning's support, recruitment and training of staff for out of school and adult programme may be initiated without further delay.

J.L. Fisher's Sociological Thought : The First Attempt at a Structural-Functional Theory of Society

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Abstract

[Professor J.L. Fischer (1884-1973), an outstanding Czech philosopher and sociologist, wrote in 1933 (in his *Krise demokracie-The Crisis of Democracy*) what appears to be the first structural-functional approach in the study of society. It is consistently based upon his structural philosophy, conceiving of the universe as a qualitatively differentiated entity. Society is defined as a system of social functions and relationships; social function as a by an interest determined tendency leading to objectivations (organizations and institutions) through which its allotment (meaning) within the social whole is fulfilled at its best. Social interests and the accommodation of social functions, resulting in the social consensus, is discussed. The degree of a social function's autonomy of preserving interests is assessed as an objective criterion of the ranking of social functions, and ideal-cultural functions (art, science and philosophy) are assigned the supreme rank. The distinction between the social action, performed within the frame of the existing social structures, and the creative activity, directed to new functional objectivations, is made implying thus the developmental aspect of the social structure. Finally, Fischer's conception of the ideal type is presented].

The sociologist's duty to be socially committed could never be questioned by any member of a small nation like the Czechs. Of J.L. Fischer (1894-1973), an outstanding Czech philosopher, in the first place², but a prominent sociologist as well, the commitment in topical political and other public life problems was characteristic. During all his life, he was active as an ardent leftist intellectual³, trying to organize our society in a better way, to lay foundations for a structural society. At a time when Europe and the whole world was threatened by fascism¹, when the mass society, oriented to material goods and to continually emerging new technical inventions was showing an ever diminishing respect for the creative and socially important work of philosophers, J.L. Fischer felt it his duty to show and prove that it is inherent in the order of things that creative "ideal-cultural" activities, namely art, science and, above all, philosophy, the climax of the ideal cultural production, are the highest social functions and should with the greatest autonomy pose aims and limitations to other spheres of human culture.

Fischer's implement to attain this aim was his *structural functional conception* of social life, consistently based upon his *structural philosophy*. The foundation of Fischer's conception was laid down in his inaugural social-philosophical lecture *Budoucnost evropské kultury* (The Future of the European Culture) in 1927.⁴ In it he contends

that there are symptoms of trends overcoming the quantitative, mechanistic era of causal thought, combined in economy with capitalism, and leading to a new era of the qualitative, structuralist thought in which the whole determines its components. Philosophically, he elaborated his theory in his *Zaklady poznani* (The Foundations of knowledge)⁶, sociologically in the *Krise demokracie* (The Crisis of Democracy, 2 Vol.).

J. L. Fischer's Functional Theory.

Considering the fact that his *Krise demokracie* appeared as early as 1933 (in Brno, Czechoslovakia), Fischer seems to be the first sociologist to have written an outline of structural-functional theory of society. The book conveys an analysis of the sources and traits of modern democratic thought, its shortcomings, the attempts, at that time, at overcoming its crisis, and Fischer's conception of the future structure of society. All this is based on Fischer's structural-functional theory the outline of which is necessarily sketchy and incomplete, also rather abstract, but well articulated and serving its role in the frame of the discussed problem of democracy most adequately.⁷ Fischer himself showed the methodological possibilities of the theory while applying it to various fields of social life: to economy and politics, to education, science and language, and to empirical research as well.⁸

Fischer reformulated this first version of his theory after World War II and the Indian reader may be acquainted with it from Fischer's articles published in *The Indian Journal of Social Research* and in *G.C. Hallen's Towards Global Sociology*⁹. Yet these, later formulations are rather difficult to follow because of Fischer's preoccupation with the philosophical substantiation of his thought. Besides, being meant to be valid for the functional conception of the whole (even material) universe, they are less comprehensible when applied to the social world. Moreover, Fischer is more intent on the analysis of the individual role within functional structures than on the analysis of social functions as supra-individual links and relationships, and entirely omits his earlier substantiation of the hierarchy of social functions. Because of these reasons, but above all, because—as mentioned above—Fischer's outline of structural-functional theory put forward in his *Krise demokracie* seems to be the first attempt at such a theory of society, it will be interpreted here in its original version.

When looking for the roots of Fischer's sociological theory, we find it, as usual, in A. Comte¹⁰ as far as Fischer's conception of social consensus is concerned; in H. Spencer as to Fischer's criteria of social development and the ranking of social functions; and in E. Durkheim for Fischer's emphasis on social regulation as the central phenomenon of "the social", although he criticizes Durkheim's sociologism and accentuates the role of the individual. The structuralism in psychology deriving from W. Dilthey and H. Driesch as well as the concepts of structure, function and the whole in the philosophical thought of the twenties may not have influenced Fischer, but they certainly strengthened his conviction of the adequacy of his approach.

Fischer sees the greatest difficulty of framing sociological concepts in the changeability of social patterns which can be unequivocally defined in concrete, historically

crystallized, forms only. He proposes to overcome this difficulty by means of the *functional method*. For when considering the state, law, morality or other social phenomena, Fischer proceeds, we find that, in spite of differences on various levels of development or in various cultural areas of the same historical epoch, each of these phenomena has a real allotment, fulfils a function which is always practically identical, although it can be fulfilled in most varied ways. The functional method is consequently, the most appropriate approach to society¹¹, and the latter should be expressed as a *system of social functions and functional relationships*.

A *social function* is defined as a by an interest determined tendency, objectified in a series of activities and social patterns¹². Each social function is determined by the respective social whole (the result of the predominance of the whole over its parts) and, within it, has an *allotment* (meaning) which can be brought back to some social interest. Each social function (and its objectivations) tends, therefore, to *its optimum* in which its allotment would be best attained.

The "sociality" of social functions is, according to Fischer, derived from the sociality of social interests of which he distinguishes two kinds: the *socially dispersed interests* and the *social interests sensu proprio*. He points out that a "socially dispersed interest" is not social in itself, but because of its being shared by many or all individuals (e.g. the interest to gratify hunger). We can add that if Fischer stresses the point that social reality is a reality *sui generis*, then the "socially dispersed interests" do not deserve the qualification "social" at all, because then only the social regulation controlling their satisfaction is social. Fischer somehow misses this point but, on the other hand, he emphasizes himself that the "proper social interests" are such as are the result of the "togetherness" of a number of individuals. Such a situation, he says, brings about entirely new conditions so that the new interests cannot be reduced to the interests of the individual nor of their sum total, but are the result of the respective individuals' concern for the social whole and are directed to the duration and development of the latter.

Consequently, a social function, determined by some social interest, appears, with respect to the individual performing it, as a *supraindividual link*, as a reality *sui generis*, having a relative autonomy, that is independence of individual beings bringing its allotment into effect and, because of that, bound by it. The individuals, however, biologically endowed, are the necessary condition and limit of social reality.

As to the *objectivations* of social functions, Fischer deals with two kinds: *social organisations* in which individuals are bound directly (e.g. the state), and *social institutions* in which individuals are bound indirectly (e.g. law institutions). All social patterns within a social whole have a tendency to a mutual accommodation and to a centralized control of those of them which are considered important for the duration and development of the society. The result of these tendencies is the *structural consensus* represented concretely by the social order, and the *organizational consensus* the concrete form of which is embodied in the state. The scope of the structural consensus (e.g. the

capitalistic order) need not correspond to the scope of the organizational consensus (the consensus of some individual state within the capitalistic order). The sine qua non of the structural consensus is the *consensus of social interests* since, as we have heard, the social functions are interest determined. In other words, there must be an agreement between the existing tendencies and their objectivations, between the stream of interests in a society and its institutions.

The social and organizational consensuses are supplemented by the *consensus of ideas* which results from the accommodation of various ideologies both theoretical (knowledge) and practical (values). The consensus of ideas finds its abbreviation and peak in the philosophical synthesis. Fischer defines *social ideology* as a transcription of social reality in human consciousness. That is why it is also determined by the biological basis of man. But it also exerts influence upon social reality. This "feed back", as it would be called today, is possible because of the individual creative activity which gives rise to new forms of ideologies in accordance with the new, or emerging, social tendencies. The efficacy of an ideology corresponds to the degree of the scientific character of the knowledge on which the ideology is based.

In the above, Fischer touches the problem of the "static character" of social consensus and of social structures in general. Quite generally, he assumes the principles of development and persistence inherent in social reality. He refuses the term "static" and "dynamic" because, as he says, "even principles of persistence behave dynamically." He does not specify the concrete meaning of this, but it can fairly be assumed that he has in mind what R. Worms included in his "social physiology" and which is the group members' functioning within the existing social patterns in contradistinction from the functioning of a group of individuals when they are reshaping (or abolishing) old social patterns or creating new ones, thus causing social development. In the conflicts between the developmental principles and those of persistence as well as of any contrasting principles, Fischer sees the cause of tensions which determine the course of social reality becoming.¹³

More specifically Fischer accosts the problem of change in the following way: Social patterns to which social interests have given origin are the result of human activities, of human production. Because of that they can only relatively be autonomous (namely of individual beings), because they must be rooted in social interests. When a change takes place in the sphere of social interests (rooted in individual interests), a tension results between the existing social patterns and the newly arisen interests. The tension can be overcome either by the suppression of the new social interests or by a change in the existing social patterns.

Though the reader is not told why the change of interests has taken place, the evident result of the preceding argument is that the social consensus in none of its forms can be taken as static. It is a constant tendency to overcome dissensus of any kind.

Criteria of Functional Hierarchy

Fischer's further analysis deals with the ontological, that is: objective, in social reality inherent, criteria of the hierarchy of social functions. His argument is an application of some of his philosophical assumptions which will be stated in the following section.

Fischer's basical pre-supposition claims that the universe is a qualitative, highly differentiated, entity. This supposition leads to another, namely to that of a qualitative hierarchy of the different spheres of the universe: unorganic, organic, psychical and social. Within the social sphere, Fischer necessarily claims a qualitative hierarchy of social functions. In a search for objective criteria of the ranking of the spheres of the universe (and within the social sphere, of social functions as well) Fischer—modifying H. Spencer's theory of evolution—sees them in the increasing degree of *variability* or—as Fischer says—*potentiality* which is accompanied by a corresponding increase of relationships (the fact of *differentiation*) both in number and scope. The term “potentiality” has been chosen, because the order, the laws valid in a higher sphere are less unambiguous on account of the increasing complexity of the reality sphere: necessity becomes potentiality admitting a greater number of solutions. In social reality, the high degree of potentiality means that a social function will be objectified in different ways not only under different conditions, but also under identical conditions.

Each sphere of the universe has its autonomous order, while the order of the lower sphere keeps its validity in the higher spheres, but each sphere creates specific conditions of its duration and development.

The *principle of potentiality* (in the social sphere usually called “freedom”) is supplemented by two further principles. Firstly, by the *principle of fragility* which says that the more developed a sphere of existence the more fragile it is, although it can face a change in the conditions determining it in a more adequate way than the lower spheres, since it can create “artificial conditions instead of only “natural” ones. And, secondly, the principle of potentiality is supplemented by the *principle of the extential limit* declaring that when the conditions for the existence of a lower sphere cease to exist, then all the spheres superimposed upon it stop to exist too.

Fischer's criteria just as Spencer's formula point to the development from the unorganic reality across the organic and psychical up to social reality. The latter appears thus to be the highest sphere of existence, although—as Fischer also emphasizes—the development is not direct and escapes any attempt at being expressed in a unequivocal formula.

The Ranking of Social Functions

With these general assumptions in mind, we can now proceed to Fischer's further analysis establishing the hierarchy¹⁴ of social functions. The social function was defined as a by an interest determined tendency leading to realities in which it is objectified and through which its allotment is realized in the best possible manner. The objective trait of a social function is its allotment (i.e. the aim to which it is directed J.O.).

From what precedes it follows that the criterion of the position of the social function in the functional hierarchy would be the degree of its autonomy, in other words: of independence of the individual biological factors. Along this line the further argument of Fischer also proceeds.

First of all, he discusses the interests, making however, no distinction between individual and social interests. He contends to be entitled to this identification since biological interests are modified by the socio-cultural environment which causes their differentiation and "sublimation", that is their transgression into qualitatively higher forms. The degree of both kinds of interests corresponds to the degree of social influence exerted upon them.

Fischer deals firstly with two kinds of *preserving interests* which aim at the preservation of oneself or the other, respectively. When the preserving concern is transgressed, the interest determined actions tend to the development of either oneself or the other. Fischer asks then whether these *developmental concerns* derive from the conserving ones or are independent of them. To answer this question Fischer assesses what is in the centre of the individual action when the preserving concern is transcended. That would mean that the action is self-centred being directed to action itself. This argument leads to three kinds of functions: *ludic, preserving and developmental*.

1. *Ludic functions* (plays and games) are indifferent as to both preservation and development. 2. *Conserving functions* (economic activities) transgressing the conserving concern (e.g. the phenomenon of epicurism) proceed along the line of the original allotment. Thus the original functional concern has grown independent, has broken its position in the functional hierarchy. 3. *Developmental functions* (art, science, philosophy) also spring up from subjective sources (for instance the stimulus of developing oneself, esp. in the aesthetic function) and are piled up upon an emotional or cognitive elementary preserving basis. But each has its allotment in itself and becomes autonomous only after growing independent of any preserving concerns. The autonomy of a developmental function establishes its position in the functional hierarchy. *Its self-centredness appears as the maximum of its autonomy.*

Because the criterion of the functional hierarchy is the degree of autonomy, that is independence of preserving concerns, the developmental functions occupy the highest position in the functional hierarchy. And the guarantee of a social optimum is the development of all functions up to the limit of the place assigned them in the functional hierarchy.

Fischer, however, does not overlook the fact that all social functions have contributed to the creation of human culture, conceived as all human addition to nature both around and in man. Then all social functions, even the preserving ones, should be developmental in their character. And they are such, Fischer contends, if the action is creative, that is aimed at new objectivations which would be better than, and thus qualitatively supraordinated to, the previous ones. The objectivations of the preserving

concerns can only then become the object of a cultural creative activity which aims at their more adequate (better) fulfilment, when their preserving urgency gets weakened by means of the influence of cultural achievements, i.e. to the degree to which they have been freed from the weight of the preserving interests.

Social development requires thus, Fischer deduces beside the cultural tradition and the individual initiative-an independent, economically secure layer of people who can devote themselves to the truly cultural creative work. That he has in mind the intellectuals is quite apparent. Besides, his analysis has the merit of distinguishing between *social actions* performed within the existing structural patterns and the *creative activities* which transform the existing social patterns.

Cultural activities are classified by Fischer into *real* transforming "the nature", and *ideal*, creating new, mostly ideal realities. *Real social functions* can be directed either *to objects or to people*. In the first case, the activity can best be called *technical* (Fischer ranks here economical function, too, because it is mostly directed to objects). In the second case, the activities are social in the narrower or proper sense of the word. Among them Fischer ranks *organizational, moral and charismatic* (religious) functions, beside the *political* function which is directed to the centralized control of partial social functions with regard to the social whole. It relies on power and its ties are legal-normative and closely connected with morality. Here, Fischer again revokes the *ludic* functions with their emotional accompaniment, because they do not only interfere with the influence of individual and social situations and divert them, but are also the means of ever increasing positive emotional group moods (in festivals for instance). Thus they are of importance for the political function and the circenses of the Latin proverb form one aspect of the political task.

The *ideal functions*, creating a new substantially ideal reality, include the *aesthetic* (artistic), *objective* (scientific) and *philosophic* creative activities. The aesthetic function creates an imaginative reality, rendering reality in a concrete form to express its concrete qualitative content in the best way. The scientific activity creates a reflected reality, embodied in concepts, in order to express, on its part, the objective order of reality at its optimum. The peak of the ideal creative activities is philosophy. Its allotment is connected with the difficulty of objectively assessing the hierarchy of social functions. For each social function evades its unequivocal conceptualization because of its potentiality (plasticity); moreover, even the rank-order of quality remains unclosed as it is constantly being transcended by new creative objectivations; and finally, as unclosed does remain the scientific research of the whole universe, which ought to provide inductions for the establishment of that hierarchy.

The task of philosophy is to overcome these difficulties. On the one hand, it is tied up to the objective reality trying to interpret its order in a unifying synthesis; on the other hand, it leans on the knowledge of this order, it completes it in forms which it thinks to be qualitatively higher ones. In this way, philosophy poses norms for the qualitative hierarchy, marks out the scale of values, i.e. it formulates ideal aims, both

individual and social. Thus as the peak of ideal-cultural activities, it embodies the whole or reality in a normative form so as to make the existing reality develop in the direction of its qualitative optimum. At the same time, however, philosophy is the focus which supplies the real-cultural creative activities, especially the moral function, with incentives.

By way of quite a general comment on Fischer's treatment of social functions, resulting in the objectively assessed qualitative ranking of social functions, two items will be mentioned: Firstly, although Fischer rightly conceives of a social function as a structure of supraindividual links, he repeatedly identifies it wrongly with the individual's performing his role. On this ground, even his classification of social functions can be objected to. Secondly, his identification of the socialized individual's interests with social interests is methodologically correct, when social interests within an existing social structure are being statistically assessed. But the approach appears to be inadequate, when an objective criterion of a hierarchical order of social functions is searched for. It should be looked for in "the social". Because of this direct inference from the individual to the social, Fischer's argument in which he attempts to prove objectively the rank-order of social functions, is fallacious.

But even if we contend that for the sociologist all social functions are of the same importance, the task of philosophy to complete sociological knowledge and set a scale of values, is certainly assessed by Fischer correctly. The question remains whether it is the task of sociology to perform this philosophical conclusion. This brings us to the last item we should like to mention, namely *the ideal type* in Fischer's conception too.

The Ideal Type

The functional theory substantiates certain methodological requirements which Fischer also deduces²⁴. It is the refutation of all kinds of reductionism; the requirement to explain social facts from a whole set of components making up the social whole at a certain time; to take into account, may be geographical, but certainly biological and individual psychological determination of social events. But the method of the ideal type, which since Max Weber has become a useful tool of sociological analysis, though conceived in varied ways, has its place in the functional approach to society.

Fischer contends that every scientific concept is an ideal type, every conceptualization of relationships between social phenomena is formulated as an ideal or pure type, which can be, and usually is, modified in concrete cases. In other words, here he identifies the ideal type with generalized concepts and relationships. But his conception of social function carries with it a connotation of the attribute "ideal", which implies evaluation, though not necessarily ethical.

The reader may remember that for Fischer the allotment of a social function is considered to be its objectively assessed trait. He contends further that in the existing conditions, the allotment is realized in the best possible manner. The functional optimum clearly forms a constituent part of the definition of the social function. The

term *optimum* is a qualitative term and, according to Fischer's own argument, it leads us into philosophy. Does this proceeding impair the empirical character of sociology? No, Fischer argues, if sociology (and any science, for that matter) assesses only the conditions under which a certain optimum can (or cannot) be reached. The ideal type of the scientific activity can serve as an example¹⁸. Scientific criticism, as Fischer himself points out¹⁹, is evaluation in science, for it measures a scientific work by the ideal type of the scientific activity.

But then, can science, and sociology as well, be used to attain any aims? It can, unfortunately. Only sociologists who are well equipped with general sociological knowledge, are philosophically trained and free from both personal biases and social pressures, can be a guaranty against such a misuse of sociology. The life-activity of J.L. Fischer, who had chosen to serve a better order in society and its spiritual values, was the best illustration of this theorem.

References

1. J.L. Fischer started his activity in our public and cultural life in the twenties. In 1927, he became lecturer of sociology at the philosophical faculty of the Masaryk University of Brno and, in 1935, he was appointed professor of philosophy at the same faculty. After the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, he succeeded in eloping to the Netherlands, where he spent the war in illegality. Upon his return to Brno in 1945, he was instituted the dean of the philosophical faculty of the Masaryk University and, in 1947, rector of the re-instituted University in Olomouc and professor of philosophy at its philosophical faculty. During all his active life, J.L. Fischer was a leading figure in our public life, participating in every major cause and fighting for what he considered to be the right cause, regardless of consequences for his person and career. Among his greatest accomplishments in our public life, two at least deserve to be mentioned: his editorship of the social-cultural monthly Index and his successful effort to re-institute the University of Olomouc.

2. Among J.L. Fischer's major philosophical works let us quote: *Filosofie, její podstata a problémy* (Philosophy, Its Substance and Problems), Praha 1922, 162 p., *Zaklady poznání: Soustava základní filosofie na podkladě zkušenosti*. Díl I. (The Foundations of Knowledge: A System of Structural Philosophy on an Empirical Basis), Vol. I., Praha 1931, 223 p.; *The Case of Socrates*, Prague 1965; *Filosofické studie* (Philosophical Studies), Praha 1968; 137 p.

3. In political practice, Fischer often stood on the side of the communist party, at the same time criticizing the theory of marxism. On this point cf. his *Třetí říše* (The Third Reich), Brno 1932, chap. III; and *Krise demokracie* (The Crisis of Democracy), 2 vol., Brno 1933, Vol. I. pp. 111 ff.; Vol. II, pp. 42 ff.; and many a problem to which his theory is focussed, discloses his interest in marxism.

4. J.L. Fischer wrote a penetrating analysis of the emergence and nature of the dehumanizing fascism and nazism, conceived as responses of the middle estate to capitalism, in his *Treti rise* (The Third Reich), Brno 1932, 117 p.

5. Published in Prague, 1927; it also appeared in German under the title *Ueber die Zukunft der europaischen Kultur*, Munchen 1929.

6. See Note 2.

7. In some respects, this outline is enlarged upon in Fischer's postwar study "Comœdia humana" in: *Tri stupne* (The Three Degrees), Blansko 1948.

8. Cf. his *Krise demokracie* on the analysis of economy and politics. Politics is also treated in "Nastin teorie politiky" ("An Outline of the theory of Politics") in: *Sociologicky casopis*, Vol. V (1969), Nr. 5, pp. 437-481. Education is analyzed especially in *Pedagogicke stati* (Pedagogical Essays), Praha 1968; and language in "Slovo a skutečnost" (The Word and Reality) in: *Sbornik pedagogicke fakulty Palackeho University v. Olomouci* (Miscellany of the Pedagogical Faculty of the Palacky University in Olomouc), 1966.

9. Cf. J.L. Fischer: "Sorokin's System of Sociology", *The Indian Journal of Social Research*, 1967, pp. 168-174; "On Uneasiness in Culture", Vol. XI (1970), pp. 242-254; and "An Invitation to a Dialogue between East and West" in: G.C. Hallen (ed.), *Towards Global Sociology*, Moti Katra-Agra 3 (India), 1970. See also Fischer's "Outline of a System of Sociology" in: *Bulletin of the Czechoslovak Sociological Society*, Nr. 5-6, 1969, which is the reprint of Fischer's paper, presented by him at the 6th International Sociological Congress in Evian, France.

10. Fischer's habilitation work was *Saint-Simon a August Comte* (Saint Simon and August Comte), Praha 1922.

11. By *society* Fischer mostly means a politically organized body; neither in his postwar definitions does he distinguish between the *society* as a differentiated plurel of people, united by supraindividual ties, and the *social life* as activities of these people, regulated and coordinated by social regulation, or to use Fischer's term: social regulatives.

12. In his postwar studies (cf. Note 9), Fischer uses the term *structural pattern*.

13. As to the social world, these dialectical relationships of contrasting principles are concretely shown by Fischer in the contrast reaction (fascism, nazism ; socialism) to the capitalist order. (Cf. *Krise demokracie*, Vol. II.) On the other hand, Fischer refuses the possibility of the dialectics of nature, seeing no empirical evidence of any such assumption so far. It could sooner lead to "arbitrary constructions and fantastic analogies like those of the romantic *Naturphilosophie* than to satisfactorily verified knowledge", he concludes. (Cf. *Krise demokracie*, Vol. II, p. 20.)

14. Fischer himself uses the term "rank-order", corresponding to the term "order" which he assumes to penetrate the whole universe.
15. Fischer's interest in the methodology of social sciences is shown by his article "Meze kvantitativni metody" (The Limits of the Quantitative Method) in: *Filosoficke studie*, p. 47-84; also his "Nekolik poznamek k metode sociologie" (Some Comment on the Method of Sociology) in: *J. Macku* (ed.), *Brnenska sociologicka skola* (The Brno Sociological School), Brno 1967, pp. 48 ff.
16. The outstanding Czech sociologist and philosopher *I.A. Blaha* applied this approach in defining the *intelligentsia* [cf. his *Sociologie inteligence* (The Sociology of the Intelligentsia), Brno 1937]; and the author of the present paper in defining the *socially committed intelligentsia*: Cf. "Socialne funkce inteligence" (The Social Functions of the Intelligentsia) in: *J. Macku* (ed.), *Inteligence v soudobne industrialni spolecnosti* (The Intelligentsia in the Contemporary Industrial Society), Brno 1968. Also her introductory paper "Socialne angazovana inteligence" (The Socially Committed Intelligentsia) read at the Brno conference held on this subject in Brno, 1969.
17. *J.L. Fischer*: "Nekolik poznamek k metode sociologie", l.c., p. 48.