



“Let’s get even better!”

Obituary for Prof. PhDr. Damián Kováč, DrSc.

On February 2, 2021, our longtime colleague, the first director of the Institute of Experimental Psychology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the founder of *Studia Psychologica*, and one of the most significant figures of Slovak psychology – professor Damián Kováč, DrSc. – passed away at the age of 91 years.

Professor Damián Kováč was born on August 3, 1929 in Nižný Slavkov. In 1952 he graduated from the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, Slovakia, with a major in psychology. Following his graduation, he started to work at the Psychological department of the Philosophical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts that later became the Institute of Experimental Psychology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS). In 1960 he became the head of the Institute and remained in the position until 1991, making him the longest serving director (31 years). He also served as a member of the Presidium of SAS (1982 – 1986), head of the SAS Scientific council for psychology and pedagogy (1978 – 1990), head of the Slovak psychological society at SAS (1978 – 1983) and head of the Czechoslovak psychological society at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1978 – 1985).

In 1956 he founded the journal *Studia Psychologica*, overcoming many obstacles, since at the time of a communist repression psychological sciences were not allowed to develop freely. He managed to publish the journal in English and get it indexed in the Current Contents database; for some time, it was the only psychological journal indexed in the Current Contents in Central/

Eastern Europe. This endeavor allowed psychologists from the Eastern bloc closer contact with many other psychological institutions, and not only in Europe. He served as Editor-in-Chief until his retirement in 2008.

Well remembered is also his initiative in organizing Meetings of psychologists of the Danubian countries that represented a rare opportunity for the whole psychological community of the Eastern block to meet colleagues from behind the Iron Curtain.

Scientific interests of professor Kováč focused mainly on perception, memory, psychomotorics, multilingualism, and laterality. Important is his contribution to the development of methodology of psychology, general psychology, history of psychology, environmental psychology and issues of quality of life. He was the founder of the Bratislava school of experimental psychology acknowledged abroad as well. Professor Kováč created the integrative meso-theory of personality and transcultural model of quality of life. He lectured at numerous domestic and foreign universities and was a guest professor at Vienna University (1969 – 1970) as the first Slovak and only the second guest professor of psychology at the university after Sigmund Freud. Throughout his active life he supervised 33 PhD. students and it is a little known fact that during the late 1980s he was the second most cited author after H. J. Eysenck in the Czech and the Slovak psychological community.

During his life, professor Kováč received many awards, such as the Plaque of W. Wundt awarded by the International union of psychological sciences (1980), a Lifelong Contribution Award from the European union for work and organizational psychology (2001), an A. Jurovský Plaque for his contribution to the development of psychology in Slovakia (2002), a Gold medal of SAS (2004), and many more. He authored 5 monographs, co-authored 6 books and authored more than 530 research papers.

Professor Kováč was, without doubt, one of the most significant and influential figures of Slovak psychology. He will be remembered for his scientific enthusiasm, deep concern for human development, excellent rhetorical skills and inextinguishable life energy.

In the name of the Studia Psychologica Editorial Team
Vladimíra Čavojová
Editor-in-Chief