

## **EDITORIAL**

An important anniversary of a top Slovak psychologist and  
founder of the journal *Studia Psychologica*

Damián KOVÁČ 85 years old

*The person being celebrated is unquestionably known among all psychologists in Slovakia, less so abroad, thus it would only be appropriate to celebrate him in the very journal he founded and where held the position of editor-in-chief for many years.*

*Damián Kováč was born on August 3, 1928 in Nižný Slavkov (Slovakia). Following his study of psychology at the Comenius University in Bratislava (1949-1952) he spent his professional life at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. First at the Psychological Department of the Institute of Philosophy of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, then at the Psychological Laboratory, and finally at the Institute of Experimental Psychology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which he led since 1960 for more than 31 years as its director.*

*Naming all the significant activities and omitting none of the important ones would be a Herculean task, thus let me provide at least a short list of the most important and most significant moments.*

*1) The contribution of Prof. Kováč to science is apparent in theoretical and empirical formulation of questions of general psychology. Results of many years of work were synthesized in his book "Teória všeobecnej psychológie" (Theory of general psychology), published in 1985, where the author presented results of researches conducted at the Institute of Experimental Psychology SASc. The book received the grand award of the Slovak Academy of Sciences for original work of science in the field of social sciences. The monograph "Psychológiou k metanoi" (Through Psychology to Metanoi) published in 2007 focuses on the quality of life of man (or the lack thereof) and the need for its improvement. The third, and at present also the last, is the monograph "Umne starnúť" (Ageing ingeniously), with the author's professional but also honest declarations and evaluations of older age. Among inspirational publications, mapping and evaluating the activities at the author's home institution, is the "Ústav experimentálnej psychológie SAV - Koncízne výsledky do roku 2010" (Institute of Experimental Psychology: Concise Results up to 2010). This work presents basic focuses and results of the institution, in which the author discusses basic questions, e.g., from psychological concept of humanistic psychology, personality as a mental regulator of activity to psychology of quality of life. All in all, there are five books, one published in Germany. Prof. Kováč co-authored six books, one of them published in the former Soviet Union. In addition to books, he is the author of at least 500, frequently cited, original journal articles of an extensive focus, from the problem of lateral preference to personality.*

*2) Another area mapping the contribution of Prof. Kováč are the steps leading to the establishment of psychology, liberating this field from the rule of "social sciences" and defining it as a science of mental regulation by emphasizing the interfunctional approach, which replaces the system approach. An integral result was the work on a complex model of personality that received appropriate credit and popularity.*

3) Prof. Kováč was also active in the scientific-organizational field. The most significant of these activities was the initialization and organization of, at that time, the most important activity – a series of international conferences, called “Meetings of psychologists from Danubian countries”, the majority of which took place in Slovakia, in the beautiful environment of the Smolenice castle. In the course of these meetings, Slovak psychologists had the opportunity to present results of their own work and confront them directly with the world then divided into “East and West”. However, the conferences were attended not only by “western” psychologists, but also by colleagues e.g., from Japan or other “non-Danubian” countries. As a significant representative of Slovak psychological community (Chairman of the Slovak Psychological Society with the Slovak Academy of Sciences, but also chairman of the Czechoslovak Psychological Society), Prof. Kováč played an active part in organizing international conferences of Czech and Slovak psychological communities – Psychological Days. Prof. Kováč was a member of the Presidium of Slovak Academy of Sciences, chairman of the Scientific committee of SASc. for psychology, member of “Learned Societies of Slovak and Czech Academies of Sciences”.

4) No less important was the activity of Prof. Kováč in the field of education. He was a popular professor at almost all Slovak universities, not only humanities but also technical faculties. Moreover, he successfully represented Slovak psychology as a visiting professor in Austria at the University of Vienna and the university in Klagenfurt and several other significant psychological institutions. Literally countless is the number of presentations at domestic and international scientific and professional forums, more than 50 invited lectures abroad, presentations at domestic and international conferences and lectures, and such, where the professor often and enthusiastically engaged in discussions, thus providing a good feedback for all colleagues and their work.

5) Prof. Kováč received several significant domestic and international awards for years of successful work. Among the most significant ones are the Wilhelm Wundt Plaque, awarded at the event of the centennial anniversary of psychology as a science by the International Union of Psychological Sciences (1980); Commemorative Coin „Hungarian Republic“ (Defence for Children International) in 1993; Golden Commemorative Plaque at the event of the 25th Anniversary of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (1968); Golden Plaque of Ludovít Štúr awarded for contribution to social sciences (1979); Silver Medal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (1989); Plaque of Honor of the Faculty of Philosophy of J.E. Purkyne University (1982); Golden Plaque of L. Štoll awarded for contribution to social sciences (ČSAV) in 1989; Golden Medal of Honor of the Slovak Medical Association for contribution to the development of psychological science in Slovakia (1996); Anton Jurovský Plaque for life-long contribution to the development of psychology in Slovakia (2002), awarded by the Slovak Psychological Society with the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Dear professor, dear Damián, in the name of the editorial staff of the journal *Studia Psychologica*, and in the name of the Slovak Psychological Society, let me give my sincere wishes of many happy and content days, strong health, and as a special present, please accept this monothematic issue dedicated to the problem studied at “our” institution: “Personal need for structure – concepts, problems, challenges, results”.

Ivan Sarmány-Schuller

Copyright of Studia Psychologica is the property of Institute of Experimental Psychology, Slovak Academy of Science and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.