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Biographical article

Mikhail Kondratyev: When There is Only a Name on a Card

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Abstract. The article is dedicated to the memory of an outstanding scientist, founder and dean of the Faculty of Social Psychology at the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE). Mikhail Yurievich Kondratyev was a well-known researcher and practitioner in the field of social psychology, including the problems of closed social groups, status structuring of communities of different types, relations of interpersonal significance, phenomena of power and authority, to mention just a few. He was also the author of over 300 educational, scientific and methodological publications on social, penitentiary, developmental and educational psychology.

Key words: scientific school of A.V. Petrovskiy – M.Yu. Kondratyev, Faculty of Social Psychology, collective, relations of interpersonal significance, closed social communities

Mikhail Kondratyev used to say that “only the first and last name should be indicated on an ideal card”. He believed that it is not awards and pompous titles that determine what a person is (hanging on the walls of his office were only diplomas of students and gratitudes received by the entire staff of the faculty, but never his own ones), that administration officials should possess *‘the power of authority’* rather than demonstrate *‘the authority of power’*. He never boasted of his professional and administrative achievements, and when meeting people, he introduced himself quite simply: “Misha Kondratyev”. As for the regalia, he had quite a lot of them: Doctor of Psychology, Professor, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Education, founder and first dean of the Faculty of Social Psychology of the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE), laureate of the Russian Presidential Prize in Education... Our article tells about what this man was like and will remain in the memory of his colleagues, students, friends and acquaintances (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev (1956–2015)
(photo from the archive of the Faculty of Social Psychology, MSUPE)

In March 2021, Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev would have turned 65 years old. He was born in Moscow into a family of philologists. His parents studied together at the Faculty of Russian Language and Literature of Potemkin Moscow City Pedagogical Institute (now MPGU). His father, Yuriy Mikhailovich Kondratyev, would remain at the *alma mater* to become a professor at the Department of Foreign Literature of the Faculty of Philology, where he dealt with the development of the English novel. By coincidence, at this time, his student was Artur Petrovskiy, who later headed the *Laboratory of Psychology of Personality in the Collective* at the Research Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (now the Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education). It was there that M. Kondratyev went to work after graduating in 1979 from the Faculty of History of Moscow State V.I. Lenin Pedagogical Institute. For almost 20 years, he made his way from laboratory assistant to chief research scientist. It was there, on 9 Mokhovaya St, in the laboratory of A.V. Petrovskiy, that some of the most significant theories in modern social psychology were created. Speaking about the scientific heritage of Artur V. Petrovskiy, we cannot limit ourselves to a few words, because he not only generated a whole constellation of theories, but also gathered a group of like-minded people, which could (using the psychological thesaurus) rightfully be called ‘a true collective’. In 1982, the laboratory staff headed by A.V. Petrovskiy included I.G. Dubov, A.K. Yerofeev, M.Yu. Kondratyev, A.S. Morozov, I.Ye. Nelisova, R.S. Nemov, Ye.I. Rogov, A. Somov, Ye.Yu. Uvarina, Yu.V. Yanotovskaya (Figure 2).

The ideas generated by the staff members were enough to defend more than fifty candidate and several doctoral theses, more than two thousand publications were prepared. One of the main advantages of the scientific school of A.V. Petrovskiy is that it is based on a single methodological foundation, which, in general, is characteristic of Russian psychology of that time. The concepts of Acade-

mician Petrovskiy are rooted in the activity approach of A.N. Leontyev – S.L. Rubinstein, on the basis of which the psychological *Theory of the Collective* was built. Its essence lies in the fact that interpersonal interactions are based on joint activity and attitudes of all members of the group to this activity, while relations that are not associated with it constitute an external, least significant stratum (Kondratyev, 2011). In addition, each group is characterised by a certain level of development. This level depends on two factors: (1) the degree of mediation of relations by joint activity and (2) the social significance of this group activity. Particular attention is paid to the peculiarities of a new individual's entry into a group, which includes three stages, namely: adaptation, individualisation and integration. At the first stage, a person learns the rules, values of a new group; at the second stage, this person is opposed to the group; and, at the third stage, the person joins the group, thanks to those personal characteristics that allow the group to develop. It is interesting to note that, using the same basis, A.V. Petrovskiy also constructs the periodisation of personality development, considering childhood, adolescence and youth as three stages of a new person's entry into a wide society. Another idea of Academician Petrovskiy was the development of the concept of 'significant other', which was embodied in a three-factor model (Petrovskiy, 1991). "Significant other" is a person who influences an individual's motivational and meaning sphere. At the same time, there are three forms of their meta-individual representation: attraction, reference and status of power.



Figure 2. The staff of the Laboratory of Psychology of Personality in the Collective at the Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology, USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, in 1982. *From left to right: sitting* – A.S. Morozov, Yu.V. Yanotovskaya, A.V. Petrovskiy, R.S. Nemov; *standing: first row* – E.I. Rogov, I.G. Dubov, A. Somov, M.Yu. Kondratyev; *second row* – I.E. Nelisova, E.Yu. Uvarina, A.K. Yerofeev (photo from: Psikhologicheskii Institut v Moskve., 2013)

It is on these conceptual schemes that M.Yu. Kondratyev made up and in 1983 defended his Ph.D. thesis on the social-role determination of interpersonal perception in groups of difficult teenagers and young men. Thus, he became one of the pioneers of penitentiary psychology in Russia. In 1994, M.Yu. Kondratyev defended his doctoral thesis on the psychology of interpersonal relations among teenagers in closed educational institutions. In this work, he, among other things, showed that mono-activity that dominates in closed educational institutions, in turn, contributes to the formation of an internal mono-structure in teenager groups, which determines interpersonal relations, in which the significance of each member of the group depends on his/her belonging to one or another status stratum.

In 1993–1995, M.Yu. Kondratyev was a leading researcher at the Federal Institute of Sociology of Education, scientific secretary of the Expert Council of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation on Pedagogy and Psychology, later he was repeatedly a member of the Expert Council of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation. This is how it was as remembered by Mikhail Kondratyev himself: A.V. Petrovskiy, when meeting with Vladimir P. Zinchenko said that he was instructed to form the Expert Council of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation and he was going to propose Academician Zinchenko as its chairman and Kondratyev as its academic secretary: “I don’t know if this proposal was unexpected for Vladimir Petrovich, but for me such a career ‘leap’ and even the opportunity to work together with the legendary V.P. Zinchenko and other leading Russian psychologists were a truly unheard-of surprise. Vladimir Petrovich looked at me, silent with surprise, with a condescending but clearly benevolent smile and, turning to Petrovskiy, said: ‘Well, if Mikhail Yuryevich approves of your choice of chairman, then, of course, I agree to such an academic secretary’.” (Kondratyev, 2015).

In 1994–1997, he served as head of the Department of Social Psychology at the University of the Russian Academy of Education. In 1996, he was elected a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Education in the Department of Psychology and Developmental Psychology. In 1998 he became the dean of the first specialised faculty of social psychology at the Moscow City Psychological and Pedagogical Institute. Until 2013, he was dean and professor, supervising bachelor, specialist and master programmes. One of the first master programmes – Social Psychology – was directly developed and implemented by Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev.

M.Yu. Kondratyev promoted the ideas of A.V. Petrovskiy and was the most prominent representative of his scientific school (Krushelnitskaya, Marinova, 2016). He was occupied with a wide variety of problems. One of the most interesting discovered phenomena was, for example, the effect of ‘descending blindness’ revealed in juvenile detention centres. Its essence lies in the fact that a high-status teenager in the structure of informal power is always a ‘significant other’ for a low-status one, but at the same time, a low-status teenager is beyond personal distinction for a high-status one. The phenomena of ‘irradiation of power’ and ‘irradiation of anarchy’ were also described, in which the role significance of high-status and, accordingly, low-status teenagers begins to determine personal relationships. It was thanks to the discovery of these regularities that it was found that, when calculating the integral intragroup status, the values of informal power have the greatest ‘weight’ as compared to sociometric and referentometric indicators (Kondratyev et al., 2010).

M.Yu. Kondratyev is also known for his studies of authoritativeness in a group. He developed a research methodology for determining the circle of authority figures and identified three levels of reference, namely: informative, referential proper and authoritative. M.Yu. Kondratyev is the author of the socio-psychological modification of G. Kelly's technique of 'repertory grids'. The scientist noticed that, replacing 24 role-playing characters from the original method (father, mother, teacher, etc.) with a list of members of a particular small group (for example, a school class), one can obtain a lot of interesting information. Thus, this modification makes it possible to study the features of status-role relations, identify the stage of an individual's entry into a group (and, indirectly, the level of development of this group), talk about the psychological climate of the community.

M.Yu. Kondratyev stood at the origins of new directions in social psychology, namely, social developmental psychology and traffic psychology. All of the above was embodied in more than 300 publications, among which we would like to mention *The Factors of Authority* (Kondratyev, 1988), *A Teenager in a Closed Circle of Communication* (Kondratyev, 1997), *Social Psychology of Closed Educational Institutions* (Kondratyev, 2005), *Psychology of Relations of Interpersonal Significance* (Kondratyev, 2006), the reference-encyclopaedic publication *The ABC of a Social Psychologist Practitioner* (Kondratyev, Ilyin, 2007), and the textbook on *Social Psychology in Education* (Kondratyev, 2008).

In 2010, together with Galina M. Andreeva Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev founded the specialized journal *Social Psychology and Society* and became its editor-in-chief (Figure 3). Currently, the journal is included in the leading international citation databases and continues to publish the results of psychological research on the most pressing social problems.



Figure 3. M.Yu. Kondratyev with the first issue of the journal *Social Psychology and Society* (photo from the archive of the Faculty of Social Psychology, MSUPE)

Any text about Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev as a person inevitably runs into an insurmountable obstacle – the limitation of volume, since it is impossible to reveal the scale of his personality in a separate publication, no matter how voluminous it might be. Warm memories of his friends (Vachkov, Dontsov, Dubov, Petrovskiy, 2016) partly fill this gap. This article is our contribution.

Among the qualities that formed M.Yu. Kondratyev as a unique and inimitable person, we can mention extraordinary diligence, high social intelligence, excellent sense of humour, great physical strength and vital capacity. The diligence of Mikhail Yurievich was truly colossal – if he set a goal for himself, then nothing could prevent him from achieving it. If it was necessary, he could work many hours a day, taking some food with him and locking himself in his room. It may seem fantastic now, but he wrote his doctoral dissertation in less than a year. This was facilitated by another his important feature, i.e., the ease of both oral and written speech. Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev wrote at the pace of his speaking. In addition, he possessed excellent memory, which allowed him to work in ‘multitasking’ mode. He never asked his numerous undergraduate and postgraduate students where they stopped in their works because remembered them in the smallest details, and in his youth he could recall the phone number of any person from his notebook.

Everyone who knew this man noted his high social intelligence and social adequacy. In any group, wherever he appeared, be it his work colleagues, friends, regardless of their gender and age, he always became the soul of the company, telling countless stories and anecdotes. As a narrator, Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev could be listened to endlessly – his memories were bright, ‘tasty’, every person around him felt involved in them. These qualities were especially appreciated and loved by his students who invariably attended his lectures much more often than any other classes. He knew many stories from the psychological world, some of which he managed to write down but did not have time to publish – the book with them was published after his death (Kondratyev, 2015).

It is definitely worth mentioning what a wonderful and extraordinary lecturer M.Yu. Kondratyev was. He always held his classes in an informal and cosy atmosphere. Before the *Law on Protecting the Health of Citizens from Exposure to Ambient Tobacco Smoke and the Effects of Tobacco Consumption* was passed, when it was not prohibited to smoke within the premises, he, being a heavy smoker, sometimes allowed himself to smoke during classes. During the entire time of his teaching, there was not a single case of indignation on the part of students – this is how the phenomenon of ‘idiosyncratic credit’ described by social psychologists manifests itself, which, in this case, was given to the undoubted leader. He introduced into the curriculum *A Course in Social Psychology in an Interdisciplinary Context*, where he personally invited the most famous psychologists in our country. As a result, the students of his faculty for several years could see and hear the ‘living classics’ of Russian psychology, among whom were Galina M. Andreeva, Alexander I. Dontsov, Igor S. Kon, Artur V. Petrovskiy, Inna V. Ravich-Shcherbo and many others.

Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev possessed great physical strength – the innate strength of his hands was superimposed by sporting activities, namely tennis, which he loved very much (until his death, if any international competitions were shown on TV, he always watched them to the end). As a candidate for master of sports, in his youth he often engaged in arm-wrestling on a bet, confidently defeating most of his op-

ponents. Having a burning sense of social justice and an explosive temper, he often used his advantage in strength if he saw that somewhere outdoors this justice was violated even in relation to people completely unknown to him.

And, of course, we cannot fail to note his vital capacity. It is not often that so many trials fall to the lot of one person – two heart attacks, a complex operation on the heart (coronary artery bypass grafting had not yet become common practice in 1991), glaucoma and the loss of one eye in 1993 and many others... Even one of these diseases is often enough for a person to get disability and turn face to the wall. Each next doctor did not hesitate in making forecasts, giving him an ever shorter life span. None of them came true, and Mikhail Kondratyev passed away undefeated in his sixtieth year of life. During his not so long life, he left behind a strong faculty, many articles, teaching aids for students to study, books that are still being reprinted, as well as his children and grandchildren, and a scientific school, which from the school of A.V. Petrovskiy turned into the school of A.V. Petrovskiy – M.Yu. Kondratyev.

Since 2016, the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education has been holding conferences in memory of Professor Kondratyev. Its main directions are related to the leading problems of modern social psychology, trends in the development of organizational psychology, technologies in psychology and education, trainings and counselling in the social sphere, issues of practical ethnopsychology, social psychology of road traffic, and cyberpsychology (Krushelnitskaya, 2020). Every year the conference brings together hundreds of people – staff members, graduates, students – all those who live in social psychology, are interested in the problems of modern society. The authors of the article, being themselves disciples of Mikhail Yu. Kondratyev, continue the traditions laid down in the school of A.V. Petrovskiy – M.Yu. Kondratyev both in conducting their research work and in transferring their experience to new generations of students in lectures and seminars. We would very much like to believe that this school will develop and be enriched with interesting discoveries and new scientific ideas.

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Биографическая статья

Михаил Кондратьев: когда на визитке только имя

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена памяти выдающегося ученого, основателя и декана факультета социальной психологии ФГБОУ ВО «Московский государственный психолого-педагогический университет». Михаил Юрьевич Кондратьев был известным исследователем.

дователем и практиком в области социальной психологии: проблематики закрытых социальных групп, статусного структурирования сообществ разного типа, отношений межличностной значимости, феноменов власти и авторитета, автором свыше 300 учебных, научных и методических публикаций по социальной, пенитенциарной, возрастной и педагогической психологии.

Ключевые слова: научная школа А.В. Петровского – М.Ю. Кондратьева, коллектив, факультет социальной психологии, отношения межличностной значимости, закрытые социальные общности

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