

Vlastimil Pták

Professor Miroslav Katětov's fiftieth birthday

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PROFESSOR MIROSLAV KATĚTOV'S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

MIROSLAV KATĚTOV, member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, doctor of physical and mathematical sciences, professor of Charles University, director of the Mathematical Institute of Charles University and leading research worker of the Mathematical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, will celebrate his fiftieth birthday on March 17, 1968.

Professor Katětov's field of work is general topology in which he ranks among the world's experts. However, his friends and collaborators know of his wide outlook in a number of other mathematical disciplines such as the theory of sets, mathematical logic and functional analysis, as well as of his interest in the philosophical questions of mathematics. The range of his interests fact very wide; let us only mention here his capabilities as chess-player (he holds the International Master title) and the attention he devotes to the problems of the history of science.

M. Katětov was born on March 17, 1918 in Čembar (since 1947 Bělinskij), U.S.S.R, and has lived in Czechoslovakia since 1923. From 1935 to 1939 he studied at the Faculty of Science at the Charles University, but though he submitted his thesis in Autumn 1939, he could not graduate till 1945 on account of the closure of all Czech Universities. During the war he worked as mathe-

matician at the Institute of Human Work in Prague. In 1945 he became teaching assistant at the Institute of Mathematics of Charles University, and in 1948 he was made Docent. In 1925 he was appointed Professor of Mathematics. In 1962 he became an ordinary member of the Academy. In addition to his scientific and teaching activity he has held important organizational and academic functions. During the school-year 1952—1953 he was Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University, from 1953 to 1957 he was Rector of Charles University. In 1960 he became director of the Institute of Mathematics of Charles University. During the period 1962—1964 he was chairman of the Scientific Board of Mathematics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Since 1965 he has been a member of the presidium of the Academy. Since 1964 he has been chairman of the State commission for scientific degrees.

Despite a heavy burden of time-consuming work resulting from the above functions, extraordinary ability and creative enthusiasm enable M. Katětov to devote himself to an intensive scientific activity and to the training of prospective research workers. He has directed a number of young researchers some of whom have obtained important results, and he has influenced the work of other Czechoslovak mathematicians.

The first scientific papers of M. Katětov are essentially concerned with the problem of the extension of topological spaces; of particular importance is his theory of maximal H -closed envelopes.

Results of fundamental importance are contained in his papers devoted to dimension theory. He has given the solution to the problem of the characterization of dimension in terms of the algebra of continuous functions (roughly speaking, the number of generators is equal to the dimension). He has laid the foundations for the dimension theory of non-separable metric spaces in proving for metric spaces the equivalence of Lebesgue's definition by means of coverings, Čech's recursive definition and Hurewicz definition by means of decompositions into sets of zero-dimension. These results, for which Katětov was granted the State prize of the first degree in 1953, have led to a new development of dimension theory.

In the last few years M. Katětov has concentrated predominantly on the general theory of continuity structures. In addition to his papers on topology he has published three papers on linear functional analysis. Though these papers lie apart from his main field of interest, they impress by a deep penetration of the problem considered.

M. Katětov has added to Čech's book "*Topological Spaces*" an extensive supplement on fully normal spaces. For a revised English edition of this book he has written a part devoted to set theory in which this theory is constructed axiomatically in a manner particularly suitable for use in other branches of mathematical disciplines.

His book entitled "*What is the logical structure of mathematics*" attests that M. Katětov has not avoided the work of popularization. In this book he gives in a clear and precise manner essential instruction on mathematical logic and its role in building up mathematics.

All Czechoslovak mathematicians esteem his work highly and wish him every success in years to come.

Vlastimil Pták, Praha