

Title: Letter in defense of peace and against the growing arms race

Text: In July 1955, a manifesto for peace and against the use of nuclear weapons was released, led by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein, signed by numerous leading scientists and supported by thousands of people around the world. The manifesto had an important repercussion among public opinion, the UN and governments, and called the attention, raised the alarm to scientists and the public: "In view of the fact that, in any future world war, nuclear weapons will certainly be used, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of humanity, we urge the governments of the world to recognize, and to express this publicly, that their goals cannot be achieved through a world war, and we urge them, accordingly, to find peaceful means for the solution of all matters of dispute between them."

In the 1950s/60s, the world scientific community, supported by public opinion, was successful in its campaign to ban nuclear tests under water, in the atmosphere and on the Earth's surface. Brazilian scientists and scientific societies participated in these efforts. In the 1987 Constituent Assembly, the SBPC, the SBF and many other entities successfully mobilized to have the prohibition of nuclear weapons in the Federal Constitution. Over the next two decades, the mobilization of Brazilian and Argentina scientists led to the signing of treaties that were essential to keep South America free from these weapons. However, a general ban on nuclear weapons was not achieved, nor was their production prevented in several countries of the world. Despite efforts to reduce them, the number of them worldwide is absolutely high. In particular, the US and Russia together have around 11,000 operational nuclear weapons. In addition, new technologies have recently been developed to launch them, such as hypersonic missiles.

Today the risks of a nuclear war haunt the world again. The current situation is very dangerous, in particular that resulting from the war in Ukraine, which has killed thousands of people, led to an immense migratory flow and generated high tensions between countries possessing nuclear weapons. It is important to remember that modern weapons, which kill with unprecedented "efficiency", also come from scientific and technological results and from the work of scientists and technicians.

The danger of an escalation of hostilities in relation to the use of nuclear weapons is evident and serious. Tensions are also mounting in other parts of the world. The entire security architecture, based on the United Nations Charter and multilateral and bilateral treaties and other arrangements, is under threat. It is critical that all countries seek to work together for peace and to offset the global impacts of this war. And there is no other promising prospect in sight other than a peaceful solution.

The huge growth in the arms race, with the huge increase in the budgets of many countries for defense, leads to the reduction of resources for education, health, S&T, environment etc. Meanwhile, resources are scarce to fight hunger, which rages in countless countries, and the diseases and pandemics that affect millions of people around the world. On the other hand, the urgent confrontation of climate change is strongly affected by the war and



its consequences. Prejudices are also on the rise, exacerbated by the situation, such as those that discriminate against scientists, artists and other people because of their national, ethnic or cultural origins.

The main objective of science must be to defend and protect life and not bring about death. Scientists must be aware and speak out against the use of the knowledge that they produce and that are being used to generate death on a large scale and that threaten the survival of humanity. The SBPC General Assembly affirms the importance of scientists returning to debate, expressing themselves and influencing authorities and governments in the adoption of actions that defend peace and that contain the accelerated arms race that is ravaging the world at this moment. Let us take up the appeal of the Einstein-Russell manifesto: “We appeal as human beings to human beings: remember your humanity and forget the rest”!

Brasília-DF, July 28, 2022”.