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Editorial

The worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He/she does not listen to, he/she does not talk about or even take part in political events. He/she does not know that the cost of living, the price of beans, fish, flour, the rent, the shoes and the medication depend on political decisions.

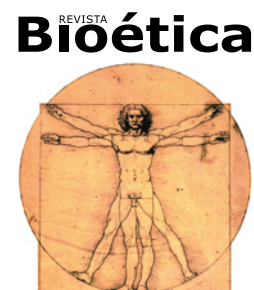
The political illiterate is so stupid, that he/she is proud and with a lot of confidence he/she says he/she hates politics. This moron does not know that from his/her political ignorance, the prostitutes are born, as well as the homeless children and the worst of all the bad guys is the pettifogging, sleazy, corrupt and lackey politician of national and international companies¹.

The abovementioned text, attributed to Brecht, highlights the alienation, reluctance, resistance or even the horror that a lot of people feel when they meet the difficulties of exercising their citizenship. It has been decades that this condition is attributed, at least partly, to the fear of freedom and of responsibility it brings about². But the fact that they are not heard, the little identification with the elected to represent them, the impunity against malversation of public funds, the lack of access to fundamental rights, such as health and education, also undermine the hope of citizens, contributing to cause apathy and produce “political illiterates in large scale. This condition is also an improper heritage of over 20 years of military dictatorship, that ruled the country from the 1960s.

This diagnosis, which can mostly be identified in all societies and in several periods of history, has also been imputed to Brazilians, to whom a “short memory” was attributed, in addition to the inability to exercise consequent political choices or to demand their citizenship rights. Even considering that the year of 2016 is an atypical year for the Brazilian society, as it has been marked by political turmoil and economic downturns that inevitably exacerbate the perception of power relations in social life, the way citizens discussed and demanded their political points of view has shown that they cannot be characterized as *tabula rasa* as it was in previous periods. While having different and sometimes antagonistic positions and ideologies, the society has reached a consensus at least regarding taking part in the national political life.

And it is exactly this desire for justice and for probity to deal with the common good, aimed at the construction of a fairer and more egalitarian society, that should prevail as the major goal, goal that should be charged as a commitment of the State, and not only as a government project that should be extended to fundamental rights. Even with a reduction in illiteracy in recent years, it still reaches 13 million people in Brazil, to whom other 38 million functional illiterates can be added³. In order to eliminate this situation that affects about a fourth of the population, we need to arduously defend public education, with quality and free access with the conviction that it is inclusively a prerequisite to promote and recover health, contributing both to avoid risky situations and to instrumentalize the fight for constitutional guarantees of essential services, provided by the Magna Carta⁴.

If health and education do not go separated, creating the key to open the doors of the fundamental rights, it should also be considered that the access to them also directly



influences the ecological sustainability. Whether it is by demanding the government to provide a responsible consumption, maintenance of the environment, having in mind the quality of the air, the quality of the water, the control of agents that affect climate factors, the preservation of the soil, the conservation of endangered species, is directly related to people's ability to understand that we live in a system with limited resources that should be preserved and distributed among all of us, including future generations.

Thus, it is worth celebrating the signature of 200 countries, in Kigali, Rwanda, according to the gradual elimination of hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), one of the gases responsible for the greenhouse effect, which is extremely damaging to the climate⁵. Although we are still far away from eliminating threats to life on the planet, the signing of the pact on October 15th is a milestone in the fight against the global warming, since, in contrast with other documents previously signed, this agreement is binding, that is, signatory governments are effectively committed with the implementation of measures listed in the document:

The calendar adopted this Saturday foresees that a first group of countries, the so-called developed countries, reduces its production and consumption of HFC in 10% before the end of 2019 when compared to the levels of 2011-2013, and 85% before 2036. A second group of countries, the so-called developing countries, such as China – the world's largest HFC producer – and the Africans are committed to start their transition in 2024. They should reach a reduction of 10% when compared to levels of 2020-2022 for 2029, and of 80% for 2045. A third group of developing countries including India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Gulf countries, will not start until 2028, when they will reach the reduction of 10% when compared to the levels of 2024-2026 for 2032, and of 85% for 2047⁶.

The global environmental consciousness and the fights for health and education at the national level report to three generations of human rights⁷⁻⁹, whose recommendations go from the individual's right to life to collective rights to the preservation of the planet, undoubtedly going through guarantees of quality of life associated to political, social and cultural rights for everyone. These rights mark the gradual recognition by humanity of inherent dignity of each human being, which makes each one of us unique even in a mass society, and, concomitantly, of unachievable greatness that intertwines our roots with the Earth and our peers. Even if looking around it may seem difficult to envisage anything besides chaos, it is possible to believe that humanity moves towards accepting inherent differences to human beings and to cultures that we build to preserve the planet with the strength of our ability to dream and to create.

Aiming to urge to joy and to stimulate serenity, we remember in this last editorial message of the year, that in 2017, *Revista Bioética* (Bioethics Journal) celebrates the 25th anniversary of uninterrupted publication in favor of the ethical reflection and practice in our society. We hope that this celebration will have the support of our contributors and readers, who make this the oldest and most respected journal in Bioethics in Brazil.

The editors

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