

Juan Alberto Mignaco (1940-2001)

We were informed about the death of Prof. Juan Alberto Mignaco, from the Institute of Physics of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), at the final stages of the processing of the manuscripts referring to the XXI Brazilian National Meeting on Particles and Fields. A review paper by Prof. Mignaco had already been sent to be printed in this special issue of Brazilian Journal of Physics.

Prof. Mignaco left important contributions to education and science both in Argentina and Brazil. He was born in Argentina in 1940. During almost four decades, he had an important role in the development of theoretical physics in both countries. In 1966 Professor Mignaco received his Doctor degree at the Universidade Nacional de Rosario, where he worked for some time, and decided to quit in a collective protest against the intervention in the university after a military coup d'état. After a sojourn at CERN, he returned to Rosario as a researcher but was arbitrarily dismissed by the military dictatorship in 1976. Forced to leave Argentina, Prof. Mignaco moved to Brazil where he was appointed as a researcher at the Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas (CBPF). Later, he became a full professor of physics at the Institute of Physics of UFRJ, where he taught undergraduate and graduate physics courses. His main fields of research were elementary particle physics, quantum field theory and mathematical physics. Together with Prof. Ettore Remidi, of University of Bologna, Italy, Prof. Mignaco was the author of an important paper on the evaluation of the electron magnetic moment.

In several occasions, Prof. Mignaco served as department head at research institutions and universities both in Brazil and in Argentina. He was president of the Asociación Física Argentina, from December 1975 to October 1976, during a critical political moment. He supervised the work of several graduate students, and has always been particularly concerned with the professional quality of his students. Prof. Mignaco firmly believed in science as an instrument to overcome underdevelopment and to improve the quality of life. He was an active participant in Argentinian political life. In Brazil, he was also very active. He was a member of several organizations dedicated to the enforcement of civil and human rights, among them, the Amnesty International. With the death of Prof. Mignaco, we lose a bright and militant scientist. He died of complications following a delicate vascular surgery. He leaves his widow, Miriam, and two sons, Leonardo, a chemical engineer at Petrobras, and Julio, a biochemist at UFRJ.