

## **SOME MORE FACTS IN MY LIFE THAT I'D LIKE TO SHARE. ANOTHER LETTER TO THE EDITOR.**

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### **Letter To The Editor**

After the publication of the Newsletter of 30th December 2015 [1], which has had a favourable reception, I'd like to share some facts that, if briefly reported, as for instance in [2, 3], may be of interest to the Reader. Each has its own title.

***Withdrawal of an unnecessary, chronic antihypertensive treatment.***

In [1], I described how prophylactic, low-dose, chronic aspirin treatment may become a non-negligible risk factor unless it is associated with endoscopic diagnosis. Now, I will describe how a chronic antihypertensive treatment may actually prove useless, or even harmful, besides being a waste of economic resources and being contrary to the rational and controlled use of drugs and medications on a need basis.

After a careful workup that lasted several months, I adopted and consistently followed an ordinary regimen of low-dose aspirin for more than 15 years, to treat my moderate essential hypertension. I also adopted dietary interventions and an equally important daily swim as a constitutional. Over time, I eventually replaced aspirin with oral ticlopidine (at a dose mentioned previously, or daily), and added atorvastatin (Torvast 10, R) and ramipril (Triatec R, 5 mg). As I became older, I also added oral silodosin daily (Urorec 8 mg, R) to treat my symptomatic prostatic hypertrophy. The latter drug induced an idiosyncratic reaction and dermal hypersensitivity, which I managed by withdrawing all current medication. The result has been the swift and sustained (about 6 months now) normalization of blood lipids, including the frequency of urination, and especially the minimum and maximum values of my arterial pressure: indeed I now experience a certain borderline hypotension. A chronicized adaptation reaction? Who knows.

***On 2 August 1980, a bomb planted at Bologna train station killed 85 people. An interval and a note to continue, resuming the account published at the end of 2015, on the man who told me he had refused a Nobel degree (4).***

The papers, and not only the papers, still wonder who planted the bomb. The memoirs of the survivors and the histories of the 85 victims have been published (Cf: Caterina Giusberti, *La Repubblica*, 1.8.2016), but many people's earlier confidence in the completeness of the inquiries and in the integrity and loyalty of those involved in the political and court procedures and sentences has somewhat waned, replaced by a sense of uncertainty and emergency (Cf: Giorgio Agamben, *Boringhieri*, 2003), that has recently been confirmed, for instance, by a new, grave Constitutional Court ruling, on 5 July 2016, regarding the reduction of some categories of retirement pensions that are now increasingly being targeted. Therefore, the assassination of 85

innocents, on the Nice promenade on 14 July 2016, is merely history repeating itself. Now I'd like to add to what I wrote in [1] (par 4, sub 2, pp 21-22) a few considerations on the inexhaustible Britton Chance. On 1 August 1980, 36 years ago, Chance called me on the phone and said that he was in Italy for a test drive of a Ferrari car he might want to purchase, at the Ferrari private circuit in Modena. "Luigi", he added "I might come to Ancona to visit your lab and hold a seminar, then on the 2nd you could be my guide in Urbino and from there in the afternoon drive me to Bologna, on my way back to Philadelphia". We did so. He was a guest for dinner and overnight and held a lecture in the Great Hall of the Medical School where, without even mentioning me or my work, he presented a series of slides that I had prepared myself when I had completed my work at his Johnson Research Foundation, Dept of Biophysical Biochemistry (we were all required to make copies for their archives), and received a standing ovation from the audience. On the way to Urbino in my 914 Porsche, I tried to scare him by driving recklessly, but he was unperturbed throughout. He then asked me to take turns to drive to Bologna train station, where he caught his train to Rome. In the evening, as I was watching the TV, appalled, he phoned from Rome: "Dear Luigi, what a close call! Had we arrived less than 30 minutes later we would have been caught in the massacre. You'll agree that the best wish for both of us is to be able to meet again ...". We never did meet again, even though I have always hoped that it would happen.

***In memoriam: A fond memory of the Clinical medicine and Physics colleagues.***

We had founded the Medical School together and were fast friends. When the 19th SIF Congress was organized in Ancona, in 1978, it was he, the School's Clinical medicine Professor, who held the welcome speech to the guests. One day he said: "I'm going to Milan to don Verzè's Clinic" "I'm telling only you". He then escaped chemotherapy and hyperthermal treatment, because after two weeks at Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele he had not even been visited. In Rome, his bladder was replaced with a tract of small intestine and he did rehabilitation by himself. He used to say: "I wonder why this is happening to me?" Years later, when he seemed to be completely recovered, an intestinal block due to an intractable mass in the abdominal rectum was the beginning of the end. What a sad destiny for the maestro of Medicine.

From Mario Rigato, Medical physicist in Siena: For  
GIORGIO

*Amico di PierGiorgio Bergamini  
fin da quando eravamo ragazzini  
feci con lui non poche birbonate  
degne di teste non proprio assennate.*

*Presi da forte ansia cervellotica  
d'invertir la vista stereoscopica  
un bel giorno ci mettemmo al lavoro  
con quattro specchi angolati fra loro.*

*Ne uscì un efficientissimo montaggio  
ma agli esami non contava quel saggio  
che non potevamo certo esibire  
per dimostrar giuste le nostre mire.*

*Superati in seguito quei timori  
pure noi divenuti professori  
giammai però di giudizio assetati  
non del tutto siamo ancor maturati.*

*Addio Giorgio che sei partito prima  
di raggiungere del senno la cima  
aspettami che presto verrò anch'io  
da questo mondo serio ormai stantio.*

### **Piero Simondo and the CIRA, in Turin.**

The interested Reader is invited to google up "PIERO SIMONDO". He is an 87-year-old retired professor from Turin university whose main current interest is his beautiful daughter, a successful avant-garde architect. Piero was a frequent guest at our Ancona home, which is full of his works that we brought when we moved from Piedmont, and also made some sketches of our first Alsatian. In 2014 he was presented as an "inspirer of Maurizio Cattelan" on an occasion that can also be found through Google. I met him after his return from Paris, where he had collaborated with Guy Debord. Piero founded with Debord - who was a guest at his cottage in Cosio d' Accroscia, Liguria (and eventually died himself) - and others the *Situationist International* (look it up!). He was nearly deaf (... just like me now, but at the time he was successfully treated) and had obtained a Philosophy degree with Nicola Abbagnano. I have a copy of his thesis on higher mathematics - on the philosophical (and mathematical!) ideas of Jules Henri Poincaré - which is not mentioned in the recent publications of Fondazione Federico Enriques). At the time we were following a degree course in chemistry that had been imposed to me by the biochemist Camillo Lenti, a professor of the Naples school of Organic Chemistry, which at the time was very strong. Lenti had been called to Turin's Institute of Human

Physiology to head the Institute of Biological Chemistry (where I was therefore accepted). We used to follow the maths classes of a former student of Giuseppe Peano, sitting in the first row at the Avogadro. He carried his baby daughter because his wife, Elena Verrone, worked at UTET as a manager. We became friends through our daily meetings. He was an expert ceramist (he had worked in Paris and at Albissola with Asger Jorn, then at Savona ... ), but was very poor, so we helped buy a kiln for him, where we used to cook our artefacts, which he decorated and painted, and eventually decorated by ourselves with his help.

It is worth mentioning that in Turin he had attended the Accademia Albertina with Maestro Felice Casorati. Since Piero could not pay for his lessons, Casorati would accommodate him on the balcony of the classroom, so that he could follow the lessons from outside. Guggenheim's daughter (who was wild even before setting up her Venice museum) had been a guest at Piero's Cosio cottage, where he had been born. Pinot Gallizio (a former chemist in Alba, then its mayor) was also a guest there and at Piero's Alba house, and competed with Michelangelo Pistoletto (google him up!), the son of a Biella antiques restorer: he's still alive, highly renowned, highly paid, and exhibited all over the world. Pistoletto is famous for his stark works on mirror-finish metal and for his Venus of the Rags (literally made with the rags that were used to polish the mirror paintings), which was accepted at the Venice Biennale. Piero founded with them the *Imagist Bauhaus* before moving to Turin. Here Piero, together with my wife Maria and I, founded the CIRA (International Center for an Institute of Artistic Research). As students, we would spend countless evenings and nights in Piero's studio, deliberately soiling with paint objects like vases, paper, wood, and plastic boxes, and iron objects. Piero, who in Turin had also produced several monotypes and begun his "ipo-pitture", gave some of them to us as gifts and decorated some of our furniture: we still have the panels from those pieces of furniture at our Ancona home, where we have also moved a double sliding door between the sitting room and the salon where we keep the Steinway. The crystal plates of the door had first been treated with my photographs, some of which I had taken from the car or the motorcycle, then the matrix was melted with solvent and some colour remained on the surface, this was the heart of *Situationist International*... . Of this imaginative, original founder and initiator we also have a wedding gift: a complete dinner set made, decorated, and cooked by himself. However,

after his wife's death we have been unable to contact him through the email, as he no longer answers letters or picks up the phone. One of his students has recently come to visit from Paris, to photograph our pieces for a book... .

#### ***On the merits and risks of cannabis liberalization.***

It is frequent for the mass media to take hold of scientific topics, maybe ones that after being discussed for years have recently been taken up by politicians. Thus, at least in the West, it is no longer news that, say, marijuana, not to mention its preparations, derivatives, and active principles, is being harnessed as a treatment. These substances have been handled and processed for half a century and have been placed on the market, including the legal market, in a variety of forms. Like the majority of traditional medications, the cannabis "family" has for a long time been explored by standardized multidimensional screening, despite its inherent incompleteness due especially to continuous scientific advances and to the influence of financial interests, as well as by official clinical trials, which still rely on the law of large numbers rather than focus on individual genomics and epigenetics. From the mass media, readers and viewers thus learn, for instance, that Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol can exert beneficial effects on the onset and evolution of Alzheimer's disease (Cf: 5), but also that cannabis liberalization (and/or free will) has epidemiological implications, like for instance an increase in heroin addiction (6). The latter finding, which we reported long ago (Cf: 7), has a well-established experimental explanation (7, 16 and 20 in 8, 1998), which does not appear to be duly and seriously being considered by current lawmakers. Are we doomed to suffer from "political incorrectness"? (Cf: 9).

#### **Reference**

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