

### Pena de Carvalho

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We were in the beginning of November, and 1979 was already far behind us. Coming from the Hospital de Santa Maria, where I did my General Internship, gaining clinical experience there, of which would remain the memory of the enriching contact with the eminent figure of the internist that was Professor Ducla Soares and the physiopathological rigor of clinical thought of Dr. Frederico Silveira Machado, I had just arrived at the Medicine Service I of the Hospital Capuchos, to start the Complementary Residence in Internal Medicine.

The hospital was a sociological and scientific reality that was totally unlike the previous one, heir of the great Escola Médica de Lisboa (Lisbon School of Medicine), of which I knew almost nothing.

Two important people awaited me, completely different of each other in their physiognomic features and intellectual structure - Drs. Guilherme de Oliveira and Pena de Carvalho - who came to shape much of my personality, not only medical, but also as a human being. The reception I received indicated a concept and posture of different relationship. "Here we are all physicians and colleagues" Guilherme de Oliveira said to me, in one of the initial conversations. It was the professional dimension breaking the barriers of conventionalism and prosaic formalism, expanding to the greatness of the human condition.

The passing of years would witness this great human dimension, so intrinsic and characteristic of the Head of Service, and subscribed to by most of his colleagues. Already in his 60s by that time, Pena de Carvalho - allow me the informality of call him such, which contains within it, an attitude of respect and recognition - preserved, alongside his physical youthfulness, an extraordinary mental vivacity. He was a man with a thorough clinical background, which was closely linked to his intelligence and permanent curiosity about everything in life, allied with



the contact with a brilliant generation of physicians who excelled in various areas of medicine, and who constituted not only a unique period of greatness in Portuguese Medicine, but an authentic best of our culture.

That enriching contact would form the basis for structuring his medical and civic thought.

Coming from a School of naturalist and positivist features, he was not outside its influence. Eloquent with words, and with notable powers of reasoning, he never denied his roots or rejected the new technologies that modified the modern face of Medicine, launching it on new paths that were contrary to all knowledge, the experimental, the philosophical-metaphysical, questioning it deeply and transforming it into a global science.

Always attentive and a model of curiosity and interest, he did not deem it beneath him, in spite of his intellectual stature and hierarchical position, to talk with the groups of young interns whom he met by chance, to exchange opinions with them: "Tell me what you're talking about, you who are young, who study and learn easily".

Unassuming greatness. Guiding principle of the true reciprocal dimension of learning, the *raison d'être* of continuing postgraduate teaching, of which the Residency of Specialties are a true paradigm and

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the *raison d'être* of the services.

His dimension as a man and as a Citizen assumes an unquestionable nobility. Born in the First Republic, he acquired then the essential characteristics that would feature the republican values of his personality, of firm and unfailing love for Democracy and Freedom.

A man of refined manners, courteous and tolerant, interested in all aspects of the human phenomenon, his expression always alert, yet calm, his eyes wide open to life, like a fascinated boy, he gained particular vibrancy - his eyes glittered with a special brilliance, his hands were seized with a cold, nervous tremor, the voice assumed particular resonant force <sup>¾</sup> whenever Freedom and Dignity were placed in question, prerogatives that were an integral part of the man himself.

Over the years, occasional encounters enabled me to keep alive the image built up during the daily life of the Residency for whom I was his last Intern. Time was inexorably leaving its marks, but the spirit remaining unscathed. I saw him for the last time in the Hospital that was ours, and to which we had come for different reasons. I, at the invitation of the current Director of Service, Dr. Barros Veloso, to take part in the inauguration of the new facilities. Pena de Carvalho, now in an advanced stage of his disease, to undergo an exam using the new technologies that he understood so well, and had adapted to the clinic.

The same singular nobility as always. Knowing the situation that affected him, he gave a correct clinical description of it, with the details that he liked

to cultivate and which he transmitted with a special touch of his own.

He passed through the Civil Hospitals and Medicine without achieving, however, institutional weight or enjoying a private clinic as other figures had done. His lively, curious, restless, rational and coherent personality did not yield to the lobbies and structures of power. He cultivated Medicine for Medicine and Medicine for Man. ■

**Note from the Board:** As a companion of Dr. Pena de Carvalho for fifteen years, at the Service 1 of the Hospital dos Capuchos, I would also like to leave here my testimony of an outstanding man, but who, out of an excess of humility or lack of showy ambition, remained unjustly unrecognized, when in fact, he deserved to occupy an exalted place in the panorama of Portuguese medicine. What I have always thought of him is summarized in a text that I published in the *Boletim dos H.C.L.* when he was part of the reform, and from which I transcribe two small fragments:

“On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1985, Dr. Vítor Serra Pena de Carvalho turned 70. Thus, the Portuguese Medical scene saw the departure of a man in whom were found, combined in carefully measured doses, simplicity, intelligence, culture, charm, humor and professional competence. (...) On his retirement, he creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill, and enters the line-up of illustrious of the H.C.L.”