

ISTITUTO SIEROTERAPICO MILANESE

"SERAFFINO BELFANTI"

ENTE MORALE AGGREGATO ALLA UNIVERSITÀ DI MILANO
MILANO - VIA DARWIN, 20

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Milano, 1/9/50

My dear Professor,

I am back to Milan after some weeks on the mountains.

We have been bearing the consequences of a very hot and dry summer, and are finding it difficult to get used again to the climate and noise of this town.

As I told you in Cambridge, on consideration of my position, I find I have so many things ~~to~~ ^{to} settle here that they will take me a long time. Next winter I shall ^{have to} take two examinations (one in microbiology, one in genetics) which demand a longish preparation. My financial position is also changed and needs looking after. Finally, a stay of some time at my old Institute - from where I am writing now - is the only way to prevent breaking contacts with it, and if I am to stay in Italy most of my life, this seems the only reasonable place one can think of. All this besides family reasons of which I told you in Cambridge.

At this point, you may think that I should resign my appointment in Cambridge. I shall of course follow your wishes, but I should be grateful if I could instead ask for an unpaid leave for the next academic year. This, in view of two possibilities. First, I have substantial hopes - unless the situation, especially the international one, changes to the worst - to be able to spend another year or so in Cambridge, which would bring to completion my present contract with the University. Second, there are so many difficulties against good research work in ~~this~~ country, especially if compared with Cambridge, that I am ~~of~~ ^{afraid} to realize soon that my efforts would be frustrated. It is difficult to forget the atmosphere of your Department,

and the idea of spending some more time there in the future would be very encouraging.

It would probably be better to discuss all this in Cambridge and I think therefore of coming there, but this would be easy for me only about the end of next month, since I am looking for a house for the family and should like to have them settled before.

Before I left, I had a talk with Sir James, who wanted to reassure me that my case was being considered by the University authorities. I asked the Master if, in the case that I needed a leave of a year, my position could be compromised, and I was encouraged to hear that he thought the matter should not be difficult.

My programme for next year work is to follow up the chloroacetic business in collaboration with Mac; there are still so many obscure points in it. Also, to start looking for recombination in other bacteria, like *Proteus* where the morphologists claim to have observed fusion, in an easily reproducible way, and anthrax, which has the advantage of being a highly virulent pathogen, ^{the} genetics of virulence having always been a hobby of mine. When Minwati will be back from the States I shall probably have a lectureship in statistics at Davis, as a part-time job.

I hope to hear from you and I hope that my defection for next year will not be of inconvenience to you. I feel the last two years have meant a great deal for my scientific preparation; besides, they have been the happiest years in my life. I should not like to pay you back with disappointment or troubles.

Yours sincerely

Luca Cavalli